Stephen King's

THINNER

Screenplay

by

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INT: CONNECTICUT TURNPIKE — DAWN

A thick mist obscures the roadway and adjacent shoulder. O.S. the loud sound of distant engines whinnying, panting — clearly out of tune.

Headlights begin to come out of the mist. What emerges is a caravan of older cars, dented trucks with camper shells, and twenty-year-old motor homes. Leading the procession is a '57 Pontiac with wide-stripe white sidewalls. The cortege exits the interstate.

CU: the road sign. It reads: FAIRVIEW, CONNECTICUT.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD — EARLY MORNING

The mist has risen and the line of cars, their lights still on, makes its way down the two-lane highway past a succession of big old comfortable houses, set back on generous wooded lots. One of these is...

THE HALLECK HOUSE —

a well-maintained Cape Codder with lots of add-ons and a long driveway.

BILLY HALLECK (O.S.)
My Lord! Looks like a Gypsy caravan!

CUT TO:

INT: BATHROOM — HALLECK HOUSE — EARLY MORNING — CONT ACTION

BILLY HALLECK, naked, stands at a high bathroom window, watching the ragged procession. He's nearing forty, dignified, not un-handsome, but distinctly <u>fat</u>.

BILLY
I bet it is! Honest-to-God Gypsies!

In discomforting Close-Up, the CAMERA moves up a body that is heavily fleshy, if not actually obese. Hairy flesh legs with knees like Parker House Rolls rise into hips like old goose-down pillows, flabby arms showing a golfer's short-sleeved tan line terminate in two pudgy hands manipulating a small vanity mirror.

As Billy puts his left foot on a sturdy, old-fashioned scale, there's a short knock on the bathroom door.

HEIDI HALLECK (O.S.)
How many eggs you want?

BILLY
Three!

His right foot mounts the scale. BOOOINNNNG. The needle lurches over the top.

BILLY (cont)
Make that two.

Billy holds up...

THE ROUND VANITY MIRROR —

so that it reflects the reversed numbers on the scale: 277. It's easier for Billy to use the mirror than to stretch his head forward enough to see the numbers directly over the mound of his belly. Billy gets off the scale and reaches for a bathrobe hanging on the back of the door.

CU: the label reads XXX LARGE.

Billy puts on the robe, and then stands in front of the mirror. He pokes and prods the ample flesh around his waist.

BILLY
(To himself; ironic) I gotta get a haircut.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN -- HALLECK HOUSE -- MORNING

Billy is eating a breakfast of eggs, bacon, buttered toast and marmalade, grapefruit heaped with sugar, coffee, and milk. Heidi is filling out her grocery list on a computer set up on a corner of the counters.

She stands and reaches deep in one of the cupboards, coming up with a six-months-old package of Cheetos.

HEIDI
Billy, it's bad enough you keep going off your diets, but when you hide your junkie-food, it attracts bugs.

BILLY
Sorry Heidi, I was just trying to put 'em out of sight. What's for dinner?

HEIDI
Spaghetti and Italian meatballs. But are you going to be back from New Haven?

LINDA HALLECK enters. Linda, Billy and Heidi's 17-year-old daughter, is pretty, smart, and much more attuned to her father than to her mother. She swipes the last piece of bacon off her father's plate and places a kiss on his cheek.

LINDA
So — you gonna get Mister Mafia off his murder charge?

Before Billy can reply to this flippant question, Heidi interrupts.

HEIDI
Don't call him Mister Mafia. It's bad enough your father's defending a man like that — we don't need to make jokes about it.

Billy puts down his fork and speaks with aggravated patience:

BILLY
I wouldn't have taken on Ginelli's case if I weren't absolutely convinced that he is innocent. (Beat) Of this particular charge.

Linda takes a half-piece of her father's toast and wipes up some fried egg with it.

LINDA
(To Heidi) Teacher's meeting today. You want to pick me up at eleven?

HEIDI
I didn't forget.

Linda swallows off the remainder of her father's coffee and heads for the door.

LINDA
(Teasing) So if you don't get Mr Ginelli off, is the Mafia gonna rub us all out?

CUT TO:

INT: COUNTRY CONVENIENCE STORE — MORNING

A small, old house has been discreetly converted into a 6am-11pm convenience market for upscale Fairview. Billy picks up a magazine, two newspapers, and a foil-wrapped egg sandwich. At the point-of- sale rack, he hesitates, then hurriedly picks out an 8-ounce bar of chocolate. Right ahead of him in line is JUDGE CARY ROSSINGTON, a distinguished 50 years, who is purchasing a carton of cigarettes.

ROSSINGTON
Georgia, last time you threw in a free lighter.

The desk clerk, GEORGIA — a high-school girl — obliges, along with the man's change.

BILLY
Morning, Judge. Hello, Georgia.

ROSSINGTON
How long is that trial gonna go on, Billy?

BILLY
Why? You and Leda need some competition out on the links?

ROSSINGTON
Yeah, and you need a little exercise.

GEORGIA
Did you want this, Mr Halleck?

Georgia holds up the candy bar. Billy grabs it and stuffs it in his pocket.

GEORGIA (cont'd)
So is that Mafia guy gonna go free? Linda said —

BILLY
Linda says too much.

ROSSINGTON
Oh Jesus —

The Judge stands at the door with his bag.

ROSSINGTON
We've got a whole damned tribe of Gypsies out here!

BILLY
I was right!

ROSSINGTON'S POV THROUGH THE GLASS DOOR —

of three Gypsy trucks parked across the street.

GEORGIA
Those guys are Gypsies?! For real?!

Georgia goes to the end of the check-out counter. Billy joins the Judge at the door.

ROSSINGTON
Yeah. I had a run-in with 'em when I was with the A.G.'s office. Twenty-two years ago.

BILLY
They're not coming to Fairview to live.

ROSSINGTON
They're not even going to stay the night.

The Judge exits. Billy returns to the counter for his purchases. The door signal sounds, and Billy and Georgia look up to see...

A GYPSY WOMAN --

pushes through the door. She's about 35, thin, angular, her bleached yellow hair showing an inch-and-a-half of black roots. With her is a SMALL GIRL, about five, with a large birthmark disfiguring her face.

The Gypsy Woman glances at Billy, then heads directly for Georgia.

GYPSY WOMAN
Put this here please.

Before Georgia can react, the Gypsy Woman snags some Scotch Tape from the register, and tapes a business card to the counter. Georgia cranes to read it:

CU: THE CARD

GINA
AT THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN
GINA KNOWS YOUR PAST
GINA TELLS YOUR FUTURE

The Little Girl pours a handful of sticky pennies onto the counter, and reaches for a pack of gum high on a counter display. The display starts to topple, but Georgia grabs it. Out of the corner of his eye, Billy catches a movement of the Gypsy Woman's arm, as if she had just swiped bills out of the register.

To distract, the Gypsy Woman's smiles mysteriously at Georgia:

GYPSY WOMAN
Gina can tell you your secret name.

GEORGIA
What's a secret name?

The Gypsy Woman and the Little Girl are heading for the door.

GYPSY WOMAN
A secret name is the one that's written on your soul.

The Little Girl looks at Billy very seriously, then follows her mother out.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY STORE — MORNING

Billy is getting into his car when he sees...

THE LITTLE GYPSY GIRL —

peeling an 8-oz chocolate bar, tossing the wrapper onto the ground. Behind her, some TEEN-AGED GIRLS are giving the Gypsy Woman money in exchange for a couple of red plastic flowers.

The Little Girl, as if feeling Billy's glance on her, looks up and grins.

CUT TO:

EXT: NEW HAVEN -- MORNING

Halleck's car passes over a long bridge arching over a scummy river, flowing between grimy docks and smokestacked factories.

INT: HALLECK'S CAR -- SAME TIME

As he finishes off the fried egg sandwich he stuffs the wadded wrapper in the bag. He reaches into his pocket for his candy bar. When he doesn't find it there, he starts looking everywhere for it. The car starts to swerve into the wrong lane.

He regains the wheel, then thinks for a moment.

BILLY
That little Gypsy girl stole my candy bar!
(Beat) Hell, she needed it more than me.

CUT TO:

EXT: NEW HAVEN COURT HOUSE -- MORNING

Establishing shot.

Billy pulls into the parking lot, exits the car with his briefcase and the Country Market bag filled with trash. He tosses it into a trash basket, when a large black limousine pulls up behind him.

The BODYGUARD Driver hops out and opens the rear door for...

RICHIE GINELLI --

nearing 50, slight and sinewy, discreetly Italian. He's been dressing well for a long time. Ginelli has appeared stalwart and poised in worse situations than this simple indictment for attempted murder. Richie is a strong, old-fashioned man but he has a sudden, impish, irresistible grin.

BILLY
Morning, Richie.

GINELLI
Now I've been thinking, Counselor — what this is all about is — <u>you</u>. You're the one who's gonna decide if I spend the next twenty years at home or in jail.

BILLY
Doesn't that depend on the jury?

GINELLI
What it's all about, Billy, is <u>you</u> and what you say in there — 'cause the jury knows I probably did some bad things in my past. You gotta make 'em believe I didn't shell out thirty-seven thousand dollars to knock off the only honest Union leader on the East Coast. Like I said — what it's all about is you... And one more thing...

Billy and Ginelli stop at the front door of the court house. Ginelli suddenly grins and throws one arm around his lawyer's shoulder. With the other he cheerfully squeezes and kneads Billy's stomach.

GINELLI (cont'd)
Gotta rub the Buddha belly for luck.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTROOM -- DAY

Medium-sized. Its carved-wood splendor faded a while back. There are a number of Trial Junkie SPECTATORS and a mixed attentive JURY sits in its BOX.

On the bench sits JUDGE PHILIPS, a graying taciturn jurist known for running a "tight ship".

The PROSECUTOR is a painfully thin man — gaunt in contrast to Billy who sits across the aisle from him with Ginelli.

JUDGE PHILIPS
I think that'll be all, Mrs Boynton. Thank you.

MRS BOYNTON — a middle-aged secretary type — gets down from the stand.

JUDGE PHILIPS
Mr Halleck, was this your last witness for the defense?

BILLY
Well, your Honor...

Billy looks anxiously towards the back of the courtroom. Just then the doors are pushed open and DEEVER enters. This private investigator is 30 and pretty beefy and black.

Grinning, Deever hurries down the center aisle, hands Billy a file folder, and then exits just as quickly. Billy glows with satisfaction, but it's clear his client has no idea what's going on.

BILLY
(Grinning) I have just one more, your Honor.

The Prosecutor shuffles through his papers for his prepared witness list.

BILLY (cont'd)
I'd like to call Mr Max Duganfield to the stand.

Immediate eruption of astonishment in the courtroom. The Prosecutor's mouth falls open.

GINELLI
(Low) You better know what you're doing.

BILLY
(Low) You got to let me run with this one, Richie.

Across the aisle, the Prosecutor is nearly apoplectic.

PROSECUTOR
Your Honor, I object to this.

BILLY
Your Honor, the Defendant has a right to face his accusers.

Judge Philips motions down to the two attorneys.

JUDGE PHILIPS
Approach the bench, counselors.

Billy and the Prosecutor walk to the front of the Judge's bench. Judge Philips places his hand over the microphone before him.

JUDGE PHILIPS
(To Billy) Mr Halleck, are you certain that you want this witness to testify?

BILLY
Quite sure, your honor. If my client paid someone thirty-seven thousand dollars to have this man killed, I want to hear him state it in open court.

PROSECUTOR
I object. Mr Duganfield isn't on the Defence's subpoena list...

BILLY
(To the Prosecutor) He was on our original list. We were unable to serve him because you and the Feds had him in hiding.

PROSECUTOR
For his own safety, your honor.

Judge Philips sits back in his leather chair and speaks to the open court.

JUDGE PHILIPS
Call Max Duganfield to the stand.

BAILIFF
Mr Max Duganfield!

The Private Detective Deever throws open the back doors of the courtroom. MAX DUGANFIELD enters.

Ginelli rolls his eyes in bewilderment, but Billy gives him a reassuring wink.

CUT AWAY TO:

EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW — DAY

Focused around a large well-manicured town common, the shopping area of Fairview is compact of scale, zoned for architectural consistency and a two-story ceiling.

The vehicles of the Gypsy caravan take up the parking spaces on two sides of the Town Common. The Gypsies themselves are everywhere. They've unloaded aluminum loungers, set up hibachis, and virtually taken over the Common. SUSANNA LEMKE, a very old Gypsy woman stands at a concrete water fountain, bathing two very young children.

A young dark haired Gypsy male, GABE, is juggling four Indian Clubs, grinning and yelling "Hay!" every time he hurls a club high into the air. GINA Lemke, sultry and sexy and young only in years, is setting up an easel by the central fountain.

GABE
Gina!

The girl produces a sling shot from her rear pocket and tosses it to Gabriel, who adds the sling shot to his juggling routine.After several rounds he shouts out...

GABE (CONT)
Hay!

... and tosses the weapon back to the girl.

Gina steps back from the easel, now covered with a paper bulls-eye target. Walking thirty feet away, she produces three steel ball bearings from her pocket and shoots three quick bull's eyes. Several of the local Boys crowd around her, clamoring to try their skill.

CUT BACK TO:

INT: COURTROOM — DAY

Billy is examining the witness Max Duganfield.

BILLY
Mr Duganfield, is there anyone else beside my client who might want to see you dead?

Ginelli rolls his eyes.

PROSECUTOR
Objection, your honor.

JUDGE PHILIPS
Why? (To Billy) Go on.

DUGANFIELD
Possibly. Any number of people.

Reaction in the courtroom.

BILLY
(Rapid fire) Would this be the first time someone has paid to have you killed?

DUGANFIELD
(Reluctant) Well, three years ago —

BILLY
Who was it Mr Duganfield? Who took out a contract on your life three years ago?

PROSECUTOR
OBJECTION!

DUGANFIELD
Well it was my wife but —

PROSECUTOR
Your Honor!

Too late. Pandemonium in the courtroom.

DUGANFIELD
— but we've reconciled...

The Jury are all grinning at Ginelli.

CUT TO:

EXT: MAIN STREET — DAY

A CHRYSLER NEW YORKER crashes a yellow light turning to red, and two opposing vehicles blow their horns sharply.

INT: THE NEW YORKER

Heidi is behind the wheel and Linda rides shotgun.

HEIDI
Be careful today. Leda Rossington called and said the town is filled with Gypsies.

Heidi is driving hard, and Linda braces for safety.

LINDA
Mom, put on your seatbelt.

At a turn that corners the town common, Heidi whips the wheel sharply. Just as she plows over the crosswalk...

A YELLOW FRISBEE —

careens off the windshield. A ten-year-old GYPSY KID rushes out into the street, chasing the frisbee.

Heidi slams on the brakes, and barely misses hitting the boy. The New Yorker stalls.

RESUME EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW

The Gypsy Kid retrieves the Frisbee. Then, suddenly taking on a limp, the Kid staggers up and pounds on the closed driver's window of the New Yorker.

RESUME INT: NEW YORKER

Nervous and frightened, Heidi is trying to start the car again. She doesn't even look at the Gypsy Kid beating on the window.

HEIDI
Gypsy trash!

LINDA
Mom! You nearly ran over him!

HEIDI
(Angry) Why doesn't he go away?!

LINDA
What if he's hurt?!

The engine starts. Heidi stamps the accelerator.

RESUME EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW

Heidi swerves the Chrysler into the first available space she sees — a metered space next to a Black-and-White Cop Car in front of the Fairview City Hall. Just as Heidi and Linda get shakily out of the car...

DUNCAN HOPLEY —

the Chief of Police of Fairview — comes down the steps of the Town Hall. Hopley is 35ish and trim. There are pocks on his cheek and the back of his neck — the result of bad acne in his youth.

Hopley joins Heidi and Linda as they gaze in amazement at the transition the Gypsies are making to the Town Common.

HEIDI
You're the Chief of Police, Duncan. Why don't you do something about them?!

DUNCAN
Judge Rossington and I are already working on it, Heidi.

CUT TO:

INT: CROSSED PATHS BOOKSTORE — DAY

From the Home Computer Father's Day Special display, Heidi selects a floppy disk program called "The Big Byte Computer Diet Plan." Preparing to leave...

HEIDI
Linda?

Linda waves from the check out counter. Heidi approaches and sees that Linda is holding a book called **The World of the Gypsy: Myth and Reality.**

HEIDI
I hope you haven't already bought that.

The STORE OWNER — fifty and fastidious with a curling white moustache — starts taking care of Heidi's single purchase.

STORE OWNER
She charged it to you. (Beat) You know, when I was living in Woodstock the Gypsies came through and stole the silver out of every house on Shakepainter Road.

Linda's sense of fair play is offended.

LINDA
How do you know it was them? It could have been anybody!

The STOCK CLERK — young and handsome — pops up with an armload of books.

STOCK CLERK
They train their children to pick pockets and they're all over Paris!

LINDA
(Annoyed) Oh, they're just homeless!

Linda stalks out with her book, indignant against the anti-Gypsy bigotry. The Store Owner shakes his head as he hands over the charge slip for Heidi to sign:

STORE OWNER
Know what I hate most? They always try to touch you...

CUT TO:

EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW — DAY

Linda stalks back to the car. She's just about to open the door when a hand is laid on her arm.

LINDA
Look Mom the Gypsies are just --

She turns and finds herself face to face with...

TADUZ LEMKE --

an ancient Gypsy with skin the color of a nicotine-stained knuckle. He wears a loose, shiny suit over an angular body. His hands are like claws, his neck like taut rope. His eyes are sunken, his lips are cracked and bitter. But most repellant of all is...

LEMKE'S CANCEROUS NOSE —

the rotting ruin of what was once a hooked beak of considerable size. But now it's broken, turned permanently to one side. It's discolored, nearly purple, with tiny hemorrhaging veins. Rot has destroyed most of one nostril and is now working on the other.

LEMKE
Pardon me miss —

Linda tries to draw away from Lemke, but his grip on her arm is tight. He shows her a folded scrap of white paper.

LEMKE (CONT)
I have a prescription...

He's just about to press it into her hand, when Heidi suddenly appears and, to get rid of him, presses a five-dollar bill into Lemke's hand.

HEIDI
Excuse me. Linda, we have to go.

Heidi opens the car door and shoves Linda inside.

CUT TO:

INT: NEW YORKER

As Heidi drives away, Linda sits beside her, shocked.

LINDA
What happened to that man's nose?!

CUT TO:

EXT: THREE BROTHERS RESTAURANT -- DAY

The best clam joint on the entire Connecticut Coast. It's got great food because buying the very best is one way to disguise how much money laundering is going on.

Ginelli and Billy sit in a picturesque corner of the restaurant, nearly empty in the after-lunch lull. Ginelli savors Linguini with Clam Sauce while Billy is wolfing down a meal that looks like lunch and dinner combined.

GINELLI
What this is really all about, Billy, is I owe you a big one. You believed in me.

BILLY
Or I wouldn't have taken the case.

GINELLI
Christ, Counselor, you not only got me off, you even solved the fucking crime! How'd you know about Duganfield's goddamn wife?!

BILLY
Well I know a little bit about husbands and wives...

GINELLI
You and Heidi have had your troubles but she never paid anybody 37-K to... ah — take care of you...

BILLY
How did you know we were having trouble?

GINELLI
I keep my ear to the ground. But you and Heidi are back on track, right?

CUT TO:

INT: LAW OFFICES — DAY

JILLIAN, Billy's secretary, stands at the top of the stairs in the second floor offices of Greely, Penschley, Kinder, and Halleck. Billy comes huffing and puffing up the steps, and actually has to pause once in the single flight of stairs.

JILLIAN
They're coming this afternoon to fix the elevator. And congratulations, you made the noon news!

Billy finally makes it up. His face is red and he's heaving for his breath. Jillian supports him for a moment, and whispers, grinning:

JILLIAN (CONT)
The guy really was innocent, wasn't he?!

KIRK PENSCHLEY — one of Billy's partners — opens his office door. He's a selfish, bottom-line Horndog.

PENSCHLEY
Well, you pulled it off, Billy. And I didn't think you would.

BILLY
Thanks, Kirk. Always glad to have your support.

Billy's about to go into his office, but Penschley pulls him over.

PENSCHLEY
I want to show you something. You're not going to believe this.

CUT TO:

EXT: TOWN COMMON — DAY — BILLY & PENSCHLEY'S POV

The Gypsies look as if they've homesteaded the place. Already the trash bins are overflowing. The men have set up card and domino tables. Two Gypsy Women are washing out diapers in the fountain. The kids are running wild.

PENSCHLEY (O.S.)
Look at 'em! Like vermin in a potato storage locker!

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to show we're in Penschley's second-floor office, with Penschley and Billy looking out adjoining windows.

BILLY
(Ironic) Lowering the property values?

PENSCHLEY
You want 'em camping out in <u>your</u> front yard?

Penschley grins, and points out the window.

BILLY
You're in luck, Penschley. Here comes the cavalry.

EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW — DAY

A number of people — among them Judge Cary Rossington — stand on the steps of the courthouse, watching as...

DUNCAN HOPLEY —

the Chief of Police, walks across the street to the Common, where he is met by Taduz Lemke, the ancient Gypsy with the cancerous nose. Chief Hopley presents a summons to Lemke.

LEMKE
Mister Rossington — he don't forget me?

HOPLEY
It's Judge Rossington, Lemke.

ANGLE ON LAW BUILDING —

showing Billy and Penschley just visible in the second-floor windows.

BILLY
I'm gonna take off now. Heidi and I are going up to Mohonk for the weekend. Celebrate the end of all this Ginelli business.

PENSCHLEY
She been on your case again?

Billy doesn't answer. Billy's about to turn away, but Penschley stops him and points out the window.

PENSCHLEY (cont'd)
You see that piece of Gypsy ass over by the blue van?

POV OUT THE WINDOW —

of the Gypsies sullenly packing to leave the Common. The sultry Gina is helping her decrepit grandmother, SUSANNA LEMKE, up into the fortune telling van.

BACK TO SCENE —

Penschley fishes a quarter from his pocket, and gives it to Billy.

BILLY
Yeah. What about her?

PENSCHLEY
Give her that quarter and ask her to raise her skirt...

RESUME EXT: TOWN COMMON

As if she's heard the two men talking about her, Gina looks up at the windows on the second floor of the law building. The two figures of Billy and Penschley quickly withdraw.

EXT: COURT HOUSE — DAY — MOMENTS LATER

Billy is unlocking his car and about to get in it. Judge Rossington and Chief of Police Hopley converge on him.

ROSSINGTON
I heard you did good work up in Hartford today, Billy.

Billy nods towards the Common. The Gypsy vehicles have started to take off.

BILLY
You two have been busy as well.

ROSSINGTON
They're not gone yet. They've rented a field from Lars Arncaster.

HOPLEY
And I'm gonna have a little talk with Lars.

When Hopley and Rossington move off together, Billy is about to get into his car, but he is startled when he sees...

GINA —

looking directly at him, and smiling lasciviously. Billy turns away, but a young GYPSY BOY blocks his path.

GYPSY BOY
Give me a quarter mister and my sister'll show you a trick.

Startled, Billy produces the quarter Penschley gave him. The Gypsy Boy, with a grin, holds it up between his thumb and forefinger.

Lightning quick, Gina pulls out her slingshot, plugs a ball bearing into the pocket, and fires it —

BLASTING THE QUARTER —

out of the boy's grasp. Gina grins at Billy with derision.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN -- HALLECK HOUSE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Heidi is filling thermoses with coffee, milk, Diet Coke, etc. Linda sits at the table looking through the Gypsy picture book.

HEIDI
And promise me you and Georgia won't go near the Gypsies.

LINDA
What do you want? Cross-My-Open-Heart-Surgery?

HEIDI
I'll consider it an anniversary present.

LINDA
Happy anniversary. I promise.

Billy enters. Heidi has finished with the thermoses.

BILLY
Promise what?

HEIDI
Nothing. Ready?

BILLY
(Nods yes) Leave the thermoses here.

HEIDI
So every time you finish off a bag of potato chips we can stop for a Pepsi?

BILLY
Leave the potato chips too.

LINDA
Is this diet gonna be for real?

Billy grimaces ruefully.

BILLY
I saw what I looked like on television.

HEIDI
So did everybody in town. Let's go.

Billy and Linda exchange a sympathetic glance.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOHONK -- EARLY EVENING

A grand resort hotel in the Catskills, catering to old-line upscale Wasps. A long, impressive, but inviting building with a lake to one side and a rocky mountainside to the other, and forest in the back.

CUT TO:

INT: BILLY AND HEIDI'S ROOM -- MOHONK -- EARLY EVENING

Billy and Heidi are dozing on a rumpled four-poster bed. Billy's size make his modest even in front of his wife of twenty years, and he wears a thin loose kimono-like robe.

Billy stirs, smiles lecherously at his sleeping wife, and slowly sits up against the head of the bed. When he starts to pull Heidi head-first towards his lap, the flaps of his thin robe inch slowly open.

BILLY
(Apologetically) I feel how much I weigh...

HEIDI
(Unmmmppph)

BILLY
I've got to lose some. Because right now...

He slowly draws himself up in the bed. Heidi remains stationary, and her head slowly rolls down Billy's belly until it comes to rest right in his crotch.

BILLY (cont'd)
...if we did it missionary style, you'd suffocate.

He waits expectantly for Heidi's response. None comes.

BILLY (cont'd)
But I can think of some alternatives.

He gently puts his hand behind her head, as if to press it into his crotch. Suddenly, Heidi's head snaps up. She's wide awake, and she gives him a passionless, unappreciative stare. Billy gives up entirely.

BILLY
We ought to go downstairs, or they'll give our table away.

CUT TO:

INT: DINING ROOM — MOHONK — NIGHT

No cuisine minceur here. If you order roast beef, it comes with gravy. And the iced tea has real sugar in it. Billy and Heidi sit at a table alone together, with special anniversary flowers between them.

BILLY
I'm gonna get a huge bonus this year. Because of the Ginelli case. What would you like?

HEIDI
I'd like you to put it aside for Linda's education.

BILLY
Of course, but what would <u>you</u> like?

A WAITER comes by pushing a pastry cart filled with fresh, fattening delicacies. Billy eyes it greedily.

HEIDI
(Smiling) Lose some weight. That'd be a nice gift.

Billy grimaces, but waves the cart away.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD -- FAIRVIEW -- DAY

A two door Mustang drives slowly down the road, pausing at several of the rural mailboxes.

INT: MUSTANG

Georgia (the clerk at the Country Store) is driving, Linda's riding shotgun. The book on Gypsies is open on her lap. It's marked with numerous torn scraps of paper.

GEORGIA
If your mother finds out, I did not kidnap you. This was all your idea.

LINDA
I'm gonna write my Senior paper on the Gypsies. This is research.

Up ahead is the Gypsy camp. The Gypsies have settled down in a fallow pasture next to a pretty nasty-looking fresh produce stand with a sign reading Arncaster's Vegetables — Worms Too.

GEORGIA
Anything in there about gypsy aphrodisiacs?

Linda immediately starts searching.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOHONK NATURE TRAIL — DAY

Billy and Heidi are working their way through a gentle upward-sloping forest. After a year of VCR aerobics, Heidi's fine — Billy huffs and puffs and pants and drips.

When they reach a picnic area Heidi finally stops and pushes Billy down onto a bench.

HEIDI
You have to be careful, Billy. You're not used to this kind of exercise.

BILLY
Yeah. I don't know why I'm trying to climb a mountain. Yesterday I couldn't get up a single flight of stairs. (Beat) I could have a heart attack — any time.

HEIDI
That's right. If you don't do something you might not be alive to see Linda graduate in the spring.

CUT TO:

EXT: GYPSY CAMP — DAY

The Gypsy vehicles are arranged in a wagon-train circle. A number of curious TOWNSPEOPLE — most of them teen-agers and young down-scale couples — are present, their vehicles parked for two dollars just outside the encampment.

A COBALT BLUE MICROBUS —

in the Gypsy circle is adorned with a Lady- and-Unicorn and the legend: MISS GINA / THE PROPHETESS. The back doors are open, and concrete block steps lead up to a curtained entryway. Beside the steps, sitting in a folding aluminum chair, is SUSANNA LEMKE, the very old gypsy woman. Her skin is dark and well-weathered and she wears a child's 5-and-10 plastic beret in her grizzled hair.

Georgia is hanging around, a little uncertainly. She smiles at Susanna.

SUSANNA
You like chocolate?

Susanna proffers a dingy box of home-made candies. Georgia shakes her head no.

GEORGIA
I'm waiting for my friend.

CUT TO:

INT: MICROBUS — DAY — SAME TIME

Every square inch of metal has been covered: with India-print sheets, with surplus wall-to-wall carpeting, with swags of heavy fringe, with drapery fabric. There are two low chairs for the use of Gina's older or joint-stiffened customers, but the gypsy fortune-teller and Linda sit on pillows on the floor. The light is misty and dim.

Linda pushes a bill across the floor.

LINDA
Five dollars...?

GINA
And a quarter.

LINDA
I don't have any change.

Gina hands Linda a quarter.

GINA
Here. Put it in my hand.

Perplexed, Linda does so. But then she figures it out.

LINDA
You just wanted me to touch you.

Gina smiles and spreads a deck of cards on the carpeted floor.

GINA
Pick out five.

Linda turns over the first: the Jack of Diamonds.

GINA (cont'd)
That's you.

Linda then turns over the King of Diamonds.

LINDA
My father?

GINA
He loves you very much.

Linda turns over a very lowering Queen of Clubs.

GINA (cont'd)
And your mother did not want you to come here today.

LINDA
Wow this is great!

Linda turns over a fourth card: the four of clubs. Gina startles and suddenly looks very serious.

LINDA (cont'd)
What's wrong?

GINA
Nothing.

Linda starts to turn over the fifth card, but Gina stops her.

LINDA
But you said five — oh okay. So what does the Four of Clubs mean?

GINA
Nothing. (Beat) You have to ask me some questions.

LINDA
Okay — ah — should I apply early admission to Vassar?

GINA
What? No. Something important.

Gina looks at the palm of Linda's hand.

LINDA
College is crucial. So will Vassar accept me if I apply —

GINA
(Suddenly somber) That's not something you're gonna have to worry about...

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRYSIDE — LATE AFTERNOON

Billy's Chrysler is almost alone on this beautiful stretch of eastern Connecticut road.

INT: CHRYSLER -- LATE AFTERNOON

Billy's driving, and they're a little closer to town now. Heidi rouses herself from a nap.

BILLY
We were at Mohonk exactly one year ago, too. Know what that proves?

HEIDI
(Mumbles) What...?

BILLY
It proves we made it through another year.

HEIDI
I wasn't so sure we'd make this one.

BILLY
(Alarmed) Isn't everything all right? I thought our truce was working beautifully.

Heidi is fully awake now, and trying to recover.

HEIDI
Of course it is. And it looks like you're finally getting serious about losing some weight. You were real good, the whole weekend. You've lost some already.

BILLY
Come on, Heidi, give me a break.

HEIDI
After all these years, you think I don't know your body?

Heidi reaches over and pulls down Billy's zipper.

BILLY
(Laughs) Hey what are you doing?

HEIDI
Thought maybe you could use a little positive reinforcement.

She goes down on him.

CUT TO:

EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW — LATE AFTERNOON

The old Gypsy limousine — an ancient up-graded Cadillac hearse — is parked at the curb in front of the drugstore.

INT: PEARL DRUGGIST'S — LATE AFTERNOON — SAME TIME

Taduz Lemke stands across the counter from the DRUGGIST, minutely questioning the DRUGGIST about the bill for his prescription. The Druggist can't take her eyes off Lemke's rotting nose.

DRUGGIST
No, no, I don't understand what it is you don't understand.

The Druggist starts to examine the bill again. Meanwhile, Lemke gives a satisfied look towards...

THE FRONT OF THE STORE —

where the old woman Susanna Lemke is with a LITTLE BOY of five. Susanna points at...

A TALL RACK OF GREETING CARDS —

The Little Boy goes over and spins the rack so hard that the cards start to fly off onto the floor. Two CLERKS rush over. Meanwhile...

IN ANOTHER AISLE —

GINA grabs fistfuls of different sized Batteries and shoves them into hidden pockets of her skirt.

CUT BACK TO:

INT: CHRYSLER — OUTSKIRTS OF FAIRVIEW — LATE AFTERNOON

Heidi is still administering her positive reinforcement. Billy is breathing deeply, and pressed back against the seat, holds his arms straight out and grasping the wheel.

CUT TO:

EXT: DRUGSTORE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The two Clerks firmly escort Susanna and the Little Boy out the front door of the Drugstore. Susanna protests volubly and confusingly, and the Little Boy tries to hide some candy he stole.

CUT TO:

INT: CHRYSLER -- ON MAIN STREET -- LATE AFTERNOON

Billy's getting closer to ecstasy. His hand's on the back of Heidi's head -- to keep it out of sight as she bobs up and down in his lap.

BILLY
We're getting there... We're getting there... Don't worry... Nobody around... Oh that feels... Oh Heidi I love you and this one's going to —

Then just as he starts the Ejaculation Groan...

CUT TO:

EXT: DRUGSTORE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The Clerk makes a grab for the Little Boy's stolen candy, but he sprints away across the street. Susanna now becomes strident against the two Clerks and backs towards the curb. Behind the Clerks, Gina slips out of the store, nods to the old woman, and then slips away.

Susanna laughs, turns, and starts to squeeze between two cars parked close together.

CUT TO:

INT: CHRYSLER

Billy is panting. Heidi remains face down in his lap for a beat, then starts to raise her head.

BILLY
Oh that was —

But just then...

BILLY'S POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD --

Susanna Lemke appears suddenly, rushing out into the street from between the parked cars.

Billy shouts, shoves Heidi aside, slams the brake, and jams the horn. A SICKENING CRUMP of metal against flesh.

RESUME EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW

The Chrysler's horn sounds shrill and long. The car skids left and then right, as the back tires strike the broken body of the old gypsy woman.

RESUME INT: CHRYSLER

Heidi jerks her head up out of Billy's lap. She stares all around in bewildered shock.

HEIDI
Billy, we're in the middle of town! Did you run over something?!

A VERY SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT: KITCHEN — HALLECK HOUSE — EARLY MORNING

In sharp contrast to the earlier breakfast, the atmosphere now is heavy and somber. Billy and Heidi are dressed as for a funeral. Linda, heavy-lidded and still in pajamas, tries to bury her face in a coffee cup.

LINDA
So how come you get a trial so quick?

BILLY
It's not a trial. It's a coroner's inquest in Judge's Chambers.

LINDA
(Difficult) I know it was an accident, but... I mean... what's the worst that could happen to you?

HEIDI
(Sudden) Your father plays golf with the judge. When the Chief of Police got a divorce, Billy handled it! Nothing is going to happen to your father!

LINDA
You mean you're gonna get off totally?!

BILLY
(Defensive) There's nothing to get off from. I'm not guilty. I didn't do anything.

Linda says nothing, but her silence is pointed and sad. Heidi's look is grim and angry.

CUT TO:

EXT: COURTHOUSE -- LATE MORNING

Establishing.

INT: JUDGE'S CHAMBERS -- MORNING

Judge Rossington -- sans robe -- sits upright behind his desk. His hands are peaked fingertip-to-tip in front of his heart. Heidi Halleck shares a leather couch with a STENOGRAPHER using a TV-Tray for her machine. Duncan Hopley, in uniform, occupies a straight chair by the door. Billy is squeezed into a narrow club chair, exposed and alone against a case of lawbooks. The Judge is concluding for the record:

ROSSINGTON
Then — to sum up: It was daylight. Mr Halleck's vehicle was proceeding at proper speed. The Chief of Police administered the breathalyzer test himself.

HOPLEY
Billy was totally clean. Ah — the reading indicated that Mr Halleck had probably not consumed any alcohol within the previous 48 hours.

Heidi is both humiliated and bored. Finally she can't stand it any more, gets up, and slips out. The Judge continues reading his decision from notes already prepared and typed out.

ROSSINGTON
And interviews made with witnesses at the scene of the accident indicate that the woman — Susanna Lemke — totally ignored the crosswalks and ran out into the street between parked cars looking in neither direction as she did so.

HOPLEY
We re-painted the cross-walks last month.

ROSSINGTON
(With a look at Hopley) Therefore the Court finds no grounds whatever for bringing any charges against William Halleck in the matter of the accidental death, on the 9th inst., of Susanna Lemke.

Billy holds his breath.

ROSSINGTON (cont'd)
(Quiet) Case dismissed.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTHOUSE LOBBY — MORNING

Heidi is waiting by the front doors, when LEDA ROSSINGTON enters. Leda is the straight-backed straight-haired upper-class wife of Judge Rossington.

LEDA
Was everything taken care of?

HEIDI
Leda, I don't want to talk about this ever again —

The Stenographer suddenly joins the two women, and reports with snide glee:

STENOGRAPHER
Don't worry. He's totally off the hook.

The Stenographer points out the window at the Town Common.

STENOGRAPHER (cont'd)
You know how much it cost to clean that place up, and they were only there one afternoon?

HEIDI
Could we talk about something besides the Gypsies?

STENOGRAPHER
Anyway, they're moving on. Old man Arncaster owed somebody some money, and he found out that loan was gonna be called in unless he kicked the Gypsies off his land.

Now the Judge appears and takes Leda's arm.

ROSSINGTON
Leda, let's go have lunch. Alice, keep your mouth shut.

Alice goes off in one direction, the Judge and Leda in another. Billy comes out of the men's room, adjusting his trousers. Instead of waiting for him, Heidi goes out the front doors.

EXT: COURTHOUSE -- MORNING

The Gypsies' Limo is parked off to the side. Billy, alone, comes out of the court house. Heidi waits halfway down the front steps.

BILLY
Where'd you go?

HEIDI
(Sour) Billy, let's just get out of here.

She heads down the steps in front of him.

HEIDI (cont'd)
(Coldly ironic) I'll drive.

Heidi goes around, unlocks the car, and gets inside. As Billy waits for her to unlock the passenger door, from behind him...

LEMKE (o.s.)
Sir...

Billy turns, and faces...

LEMKE --

who smiles grimly, drawing apart his narrow cracked lips. He lifts one gnarled, yellowed hand, and softly brushes his knuckles against Billy's cheek. He whispers:

LEMKE
Thinner...

HEIDI (o.s.)
Billy?

The passenger door is pushed open from inside. Billy looks down into Heidi's annoyed and impatient face.

HEIDI
Come on. Get in.

Billy whips back around, but the old Gypsy is gone. The Gypsy Limo glides silently past. Lemke's voice echoes in Billy's head.

LEMKE (o.s.)
Thinner...

Billy touches his cheek.

CUT TO:

EXT: ARNCASTER FARM -- DAY

The Gypsies are decamping. Like a funeral cortege, the caravan files slowly out of the field and onto the highway. Duncan Hopley and his deputy RAND stand with Arncaster, the farmer who rented his land to the Gypsies. Arncaster is counting out bills and reluctantly handing them to the old Gypsy Lemke.

ARNCASTER
I'm not counting today. You get that back too.

Lemke pockets the money without reply or thanks.

HOPLEY
(Uncomfortable) Look Lemke, I'm very sorry about what happened to your wife.

LEMKE
My wife? Your friend Mister William Halleck killed my daughter!

DEPUTY RAND
That old woman was your daughter?!

LEMKE
Susanna was my baby. I had five girls.

HOPLEY
How old are you, Lemke?

Lemke raises a hand into the air, as if he were going to count on his fingers.

HOPLEY
What is that supposed to mean?

But Lemke only smiles. As he lowers his arm, his fingers brush Hopley's cheek. The old Gypsy leans forwards and whispers something to Hopley.

Rand moves forward as if to back up his chief.

DEPUTY RAND
On your way, Mister.

Lemke shrugs, pulls back, and enters the Gypsy Limo, which pulls up the last in the line of vehicles exiting the field.

Hopley, still distracted by what just happened, watches the Limo drive slowly off. Then he leans down to pick up a coarse blanket the Gypsies left behind. But beneath it...

THREE BANTAM ROOSTERS --

are arranged neatly side by side. They've been freshly killed.

HOPLEY
God damn it, Arncaster! Did you know they were fighting cocks?!

ARNCASTER
Knew they were fighting dogs. But these birds didn't die in the ring.

RAND
How do you know?

Arncaster picks up one of the dead birds. Its heads flops over on a broken neck.

ARNCASTER
'Cause somebody wrung their necks.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: BASEMENT — HALLECK HOUSE — DAY

In the finished basement, next to a dusty $900 home Nautilus machine, Billy stands profile in front of a full-length mirror. Despite some distortion, it's clear Billy's lost weight — about ten pounds. He's bunching the waist of his trousers together at his stomach. When he lets go...

HIS PANTS DROP COMICALLY TO THE FLOOR —

Billy steps out of the trousers and onto an ancient set of bathroom scales with a broken base. The scales are so tilted he has difficulty keeping his balance. He peers down at the figures.

BILLY
(Uncertain) Two... Seventy... Four...
Jesus I must have lost more than...
Oh two-sixty-four! That's more like it.

He gets down off the scale, pulls a pair of out-grown trousers from a storage rack and starts to get into them. But then he stops and peers at the scales again.

He drops his too-big trousers onto the scale and with his foot rubs the dust off — men big as Billy like to avoid bending over a lot.

BILLY (cont'd)
Christ! That's two-sixty-one!

Suddenly the door at the head of the stairs opens, and Heidi's form is silhouetted in the rectangle of light above Billy.

HEIDI
Billy? Michael Houston is here!

BILLY
Coming!

He pulls on his old pants, cinches the belt, and picks up his golf clubs.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN -- HALLECK HOUSE -- DAY -- MOMENTS LATER

When Billy comes through with his golf clubs, Heidi is leaning on the counter, fiddling with her computer. A cigarette is burning in an already filled ashtray. Billy reaches past her to take a large sack of potato chips out of the cupboard.

HEIDI
(Not looking at him) Did you weigh yourself?

BILLY
Two-sixty-three.

Heidi punches the number into the computer.

HEIDI
That's fourteen pounds in twelve days.

BILLY
(Beat) Yeah, I finally found a diet that works.

He starts to scarf down potato chips. Car Horn sounds O.S. He starts out, but...

HEIDI
Billy, maybe you're losing weight because you feel guilty for causing the death of that old woman.

Billy whirls round, astonished.

BILLY
And you don't?!

HEIDI
I wasn't driving.

Billy is both astonished and appalled by Heidi's attitude.

BILLY
Right. So that's why you've taken up chain smoking again?

Billy stalks out. Heidi angrily stubs out her cigarette.

CUT TO:

EXT: GOLF COURSE — COUNTRY CLUB — DAY

Houston makes a neat drive. Billy slices.

HOUSTON
You want a diagnosis of your game, Billy? No charge...

Billy doesn't respond.

HOUSTON (cont'd)
Billy, your game sucks. But the exercise is starting to do you good.

From the side comes Penschley's sarcastic voice:

PENSCHLEY (o.s.)
Nothing like a little manslaughter acquittal to turn a man's life around.

Billy rolls his eyes, and turns to greet...

A FOURSOME —

made up of Penschley and his date (the Court Stenographer), and Cary and Leda Rossington.

LEDA
(Sotto voce, to Cary) Why doesn't she shut that idiot up?

Embarrassed, the Court Stenographer gives Penschley the high sign to cool it. Penschley pulls away from her with a sly Grin.

PENSCHLEY
Listen, you better leave me alone or I'm gonna give Billy five dollars to run you down in that golf cart.

BILLY
Mike, let's get out of here!

Billy pushes a disconcerted Houston towards the golf cart. Judge Rossington is annoyed with Penschley's loud mouth:

CARY ROSSINGTON
Penschley, you just can't talk about this!

PENSCHLEY
Hey, we're among friends...

Billy speeds away in the golf cart.

CUT TO:

INT: LOCKER ROOM -- COUNTRY CLUB -- LATE AFTERNOON

Here the Movers & Shakers of Fairview swagger and boast like Real Men in front of the sixteen-year-old Caddies.

Mike Houston goes to his locker, where Rossington has been waiting for him on a bench. The Judge raises his shirt.

ROSSINGTON
Michael, look at this, would you?

Rossington indicates a raised patch of dry, reddish, scaly skin over his solar plexus. Houston barely glances at the place before he diagnoses:

HOUSTON
Your psoriasis is coming back.

ROSSINGTON
Why?

HOUSTON
Stress probably. You send the wrong man to the gas chamber lately?

Rossington heads for the shower. Houston looks round and sees...

BILLY —

standing on the scales. Embarrassed about his size, he wears a bath towel the way a woman does, covering him below-the-knee to above-the-nipple.

HOUSTON
Looks like you lost a little.

Houston grabs the towel off Billy and adjusts the balance weights.

HOUSTON (cont'd)
259.

BILLY
Hey! I've lost two pounds <u>today</u>!

HOUSTON
Before you know it, you'll be able to see your balls without standing on a mirror.

General laughter. Billy grabs his towel back and heads for the showers.

IN THE SHOWERS —

The tiled room is filled with steam. Rossington scrubs at the patch of rough, darkened skin in the middle of his torso. Billy enters.

BILLY
Cary, I guess I never really thanked you for — for taking care of me last week.

ROSSINGTON
I didn't tell you what happened right after that, did I? Leda and I went out to lunch that day, and when I came out of the restaurant, that old Gypsy was waiting for me.

BILLY
(Shudders) What did he said.

ROSSINGTON
It's not what he said — it's what he did. He poked me. Right here.

Rossington points at the patch of horny skin on his solar plexus.

BILLY
Yes — but what did he say?!

ROSSINGTON
I don't know, Billy! The old bastard just kept on poking at me!

Rossington keeps scrubbing away at his stomach.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — MORNING

Heidi stands at the counter, smoking to the last drag as she waits for coffee to be ready. When the dripping finally stops, she drops the cigarette down the disposal, washes out the ashtray, hides the pack, and sprays air freshener.

INT: BATHROOM — MORNING — MOMENTS LATER

We see Billy's feet on the scales. O.S. there's a Knock at the door.

BILLY
Coffee smells good!

Heidi opens the door. Billy reaches for the cup but Heidi holds it back.

HEIDI
What does it say?

BILLY
246.

Heidi peers over at the scales.

HEIDI
245.

Heidi at last hands over the cup.

HEIDI (cont'd)
You're off Equal and back on regular sugar.

Billy tastes the coffee, and pointedly relishes it.

BILLY
I can taste the difference!

Heidi can't bottle it up any longer:

HEIDI
Billy, you're losing two pounds a day!

BILLY
(Forced) And I feel wonderful!

You wouldn't know it by his expression.

CUT TO:

INT: BILLY'S OFFICE — DAY

Billy has shoved aside all his law books and papers, and cleared a space for the eight or nine boxes of Chinese food that he and Linda are sharing. It's pouring rain out. Billy is distinctly thinner. His clothes hang on him.

Billy and Linda each survey the empty boxes of Chinese food, then exchange a glance. They laugh simultaneously.

LINDA
Boy, Dad. Great diet.

BILLY
What's your fortune say?

He's digging out the last noodle from one of the white boxes. She opens a fortune cookie.

LINDA
It says, "You will attend a party where strange customs prevail..." Oh right, Aunt Rhoda.

BILLY
Don't stay in New York too long. I can't do without our picnics.

Billy cracks open his cookie. Reads the fortune. Looks troubled.

LINDA
So what does it say?

BILLY
(False courage) "You are surrounded by loved ones."

CU: BILLY'S FORTUNE

It reads simply: <u>THINNER</u>.

CUT TO:

INT: PEARL DRUGGIST'S -- FAIRVIEW -- DAY

Billy's at the dietary shelves, looking at the weight gain products. A female Oriental PHARMACIST peers at Billy over the side of the Pharmacist's Perch.

PHARMACIST
You're starting to look real good. Tell me what you're using so I can recommend it.

BILLY
Will power.

PHARMACIST
Well, don't lose too much at one time. It'll make your skin all puffy and pasty.

She disappears and goes to a customer with a finished package.

PHARMACIST (cont'd)
Here you go, Chief. I put in your first refill too. Looks like you'll need it.

Hearing this, Billy turns the corner of the Pharmacy perch and sees...

DUNCAN HOPLEY'S ACNE-SCARRED FACE --

The Chief of Police has the complexion of an overweight 13-year- old the day school pictures are taken. Blackheads and whiteheads freckle his face and neck. They're raw and scarring where he's tried to shave.

BILLY
Jeez you must be allergic to something!

HOPLEY
Yeah, Gypsies.

BILLY
(Alarmed) What does that mean?

HOPLEY
This started about a month ago — I went out to Arncaster's place just to make sure they were really going. They went, but there was this goddamn blanket they left behind. Like an idiot I picked it up and man it must have had Gyp Germs and Gyp Fleas all over it!

Hopley grabs a canister of anti-itch spray and heads out.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — HALLECK HOUSE — EVENING — MINUTES LATER

Heidi is entering Billy's new weight numbers into the computer. Billy himself has been making a batch of frozen roll-out cookies. He puts two trays into the oven, then starts nibbling on what remains of the frozen cookie roll.

BILLY
Make up your mind. You want me fat or you want me thin?

HEIDI
All I know is that sudden weight loss is one of the Seven Warning Signs.

BILLY
Christ! If I gain weight, I have a heart attack! If I lose weight, I get cancer!

HEIDI
I ran into Michael Houston yesterday. He wants you to take a few tests.

Billy makes no reply.

HEIDI (cont'd)
If you won't do it for yourself, do it for Linda.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: HOUSTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

The kind of doctor's office that Medicaid patients never get to see. It's all mahogany and brass. A week or so has passed, and Billy's fifteen pounds lighter. He has a pallor, and he's starting to look sick. He's gobbling Lorna Doone's from a full-sized pack in his jacket pocket.

HOUSTON
I didn't want to get you in here till all the tests were back. The shit cards came in this morning.

Houston leafs through Billy's file, frowning slightly.

BILLY
Tell me the truth, Michael. Because I'm getting scared.

HOUSTON
It's the people who aren't scared who die young. (Long beat) Everything looks fine.

BILLY
<u>Fine</u>?!

HOUSTON
Everything looks fine. The lab ran 23 different tests on your blood and they all turned out good. Cholesterol is down, same with the triglycerides. You probably haven't been this healthy in fifteen years.

BILLY
But what about all the weight I'm losing?

HOUSTON
You're at 235 —

BILLY
That was a week and a half ago! Now I'm down to 212!

HOUSTON
Good! Because 212 is still 40 pounds over your optimum weight.

Billy just shakes his head.

BILLY
It's AIDS, isn't it?

HOUSTON
You're HIV-Negative, and we tested twice. Heidi was worried about that too.

BILLY
So what do I do?

HOUSTON
Wait a few days. It's a little premature to get crazy.

CUT TO:

EXT: DOWNTOWN FAIRVIEW — AFTERNOON

Billy and Penschley exit a restaurant and walk back towards their office. Penschley stops Billy at a machine that gauges blood-pressure, pulse, and weight for 50c. Penschley digs into his pocket for two quarters.

PENSCHLEY
Here you go. Be my guest.

Billy takes the quarters, and pointedly uses them to buy a newspaper in a box next to the weight machine.

PENSCHLEY (cont'd)
What's your secret, Billy? Mike Houston give you some of his special pills to help you shed the lard?

BILLY
You know, Kirk, your sense of humor sucks.

Before they walk on, Billy has to stop and stick his shirttail back in. He even tries to cinch his belt tighter, but he's run out of holes.

PENSCHLEY
So let me speak plainly — don't wear that suit in court this afternoon.

Reluctantly, Billy nods agreement. Penschley walks on while Billy heads towards the door of an upscale men's shop only a few feet away.

CUT TO:

INT: MEN'S CLOTHING STORE -- FAIRVIEW -- DAY

The OWNER of this small upscale shop is as big as Billy was when we first saw him. Billy is looking through a rack selection of 42"-waist trousers, while the Owner tape-measures his waist. He shows Billy the tape.

BILLY
You mean I'm down to a 40?

OWNER
You can probably take a 38, damn you.

BILLY
Do you have any scales?

CUT TO:

INT: BACK ROOM -- MEN'S STORE -- DAY

Billy stands on an industrial scales next to a small loading bay with many boxes for shipping. He shakes his head grimly.

The scales read 211.

BILLY
Is this thing accurate?

He's speaking to the Owner, who comes in popping M&M's out of a large bag. He hands Billy a pair of trousers.

OWNER
You're gonna need new shirts, too.

The Owner looks at Billy closely as he tries on the trousers.

OWNER (cont'd)
This diet you're on — do you have to give up liquor?

Billy nods, and reaches for a handful of M&Ms.

CUT TO:

EXT: FAIRVIEW TRAIN STATION — DAY

As a train approaches, Heidi is at the news kiosk, purchasing a number of Home Computer magazines. Billy and Linda are saying good-bye — Billy's lost another ten pounds. His farewell is so predictable that Linda joins in:

BILLY & LINDA
Call me when you get there.

They both laugh. Billy places a folded check in Linda's hand.

LINDA
I'll stay here if you need me.

BILLY
You'll see me next week. Mike Houston is sending me to an incredibly expensive Manhattan specialist.

The train arrives. Heidi comes up, and rather coldly kisses Linda. But Linda is alarmed at the word specialist.

LINDA
Daddy, what kind of specialist?

BILLY
The kind that's going to make me fat again. But so far, nobody can find anything wrong with me.

Linda gets onto the train, smiling and waving at her parents. Heidi hands Billy a bag of potato chips.

HEIDI
If there's nothing really wrong with you, why do you keep losing weight?

CUT TO:

INT: LOCKER ROOM — COUNTRY CLUB — LATE AFTERNOON

Hardly anyone here. The CLUB TRAINER stands next to the scales. Billy steps up onto them, and the Trainer adjusts the weights.

TRAINER
200 even.

Houston comes up, tennis racket over his shoulder.

BILLY
Is it time to start getting crazy? I'm dropping faster.

HOUSTON
That specialist I sent you to called today. Let me see if I can get hold of him right now.

The Trainer grabs Billy's wrist and raises his arm. The skin beneath his biceps droops heavy and loose.

TRAINER
But you'll be looking good once we get you on a program to take care of these turkey wattles.

INT: COUNTRY CLUB DINING ROOM — EVENING

Billy sits before a table-ful of nosh dishes — pretzels, shrimp cocktail, fried potato skins, and the like. He watches as Mike Houston stops and speaks to...

LEDA ROSSINGTON —

who is dining and drinking alone. Then Houston comes over, and stares at the array of dishes.

HOUSTON
I finally got through to that Park Avenue doctor.

BILLY
Good. I don't want to be late for dinner. What'd he say?

HOUSTON
Good news. It's definitely not a tapeworm or any other multi-cellular parasite. Your immune system is down a bit, but you're definitely HIV-Negative.

BILLY
Well what's he going to do for me?

HOUSTON
He's recommended a clinic. And Billy, even if you don't want to go, you've got to for Heidi's sake. She's upset.

He starts to go, but Billy holds him back. He indicates Leda with a nod of his head.

BILLY
Mike — Leda was eating alone last night, too. Is the Judge sick?

HOUSTON
(Surprised) No! He's just out of town. His sister was in a bad wreck I think.

BILLY
Cary Rossington is an only child.

Houston shrugs and leaves. Billy looks over at Leda Rossington, thoughtfully.

CUT TO:

INT: UPSTAIRS — HALLECK HOUSE — NIGHT

IN THE BATHROOM —

Heidi gets out of the shower and steps onto the scales.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM —

Billy finishes packing a bag with the few clothes he has that fit. He tosses the old Tents-for-Guys wardrobe onto a pile on the floor. Heidi enters in bathrobe.

BILLY
Those don't fit now either.

HEIDI
Well don't just leave them <u>there</u>...

BILLY
Would you call Goodwill tomorrow?

Billy kicks the clothes into his closet, then gets his keys and wallet.

HEIDI
Are you still going over to the Rossingtons? I told you — Cary's out of town.

BILLY
He may be back by now.

CUT TO:

EXT: ROSSINGTON HOUSE -- NIGHT

Judge Cary and Leda Rossington's place is bigger than the Halleck house, and it's in a more exclusive neighborhood. Billy stands on the front stoop and rings the bell. No answer. He hears a noise above him. He steps back, sees a shadow pass a second floor bathroom window.

When he rings the bell again, the door is opened immediately, by Leda Rossington. She finishes off what remains in her Old-Fashioned glass, and then looks at Billy coldly, saying nothing.

BILLY
Leda? I came to see Cary.

LEDA
(Calloused) He's out of town.

BILLY
Then who's upstairs?

LEDA
Go away, Billy.

BILLY
What's wrong with him, Leda? Is he losing weight?

LEDA
(Bewildered) What?

It's obvious that Leda hasn't even noticed Billy's weight loss.

BILLY
Lost weight, Leda. Like me. I've lost over seventy pounds.

Leda puts her inebriated attention on Billy.

LEDA
It doesn't look good on you.

But she lets him into the house.

CUT TO:

INT: ROSSINGTON HOUSE — NIGHT — MINUTES LATER

Billy stands at the foot of the stairs. Leda comes out of the kitchen with a drink for Billy, and a re-freshened drink for herself.

LEDA
You'll need this.

Handing the drink to Billy, she puts herself on the lowest step and calls:

LEDA (cont'd)
Cary! It's Billy Halleck! You want to see him?!

There's no reply. Leda shrugs.

LEDA (cont'd)
You're here. Might as well go on up.

Billy starts up the stairs.

INT: SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY — ROSSINGTON HOUSE — NIGHT

Billy stops on the top landing. Everything's dark, except for...

THE LIGHT BENEATH THE BATHROOM DOOR —

Billy goes up and knocks softly.

BILLY
Cary, it's Billy. You want to come out, or you want me to come in?

No response.

BILLY (cont'd)
I'm coming in. Okay, Cary?

Billy slowly opens the bathroom door. He takes one step in. The glass slips from his hand, and smashes on the tiled bathroom floor.

BILLY (cont'd)
Oh my God...

INT: BATHROOM

In the bathtub is...

RAWHIDE CARY —

Every square inch of the Judge's skin has hardened and dried. It is now cracked like desert clay, the patches pulling apart to expose raw flesh beneath. His eyelids have coarsened so that he can see only through slits; his lips are torn and raw.

BILLY
Oh Cary...!

While Billy stares, Cary awkwardly places a cigarette between toothless black gums and lights up with a Bic lighter.

MOMENTS LATER —

Billy is seated on the toilet lid. Still smoking, Rawhide Cary spritzes his upper body with a plant sprayer.

BILLY
What is it, Cary?

When Rawhide-Cary replies, his speech is labored and careful — it's also cold and bitterly ironic.

RAWHIDE-CARY
We're not quite sure. (Beat) I went to Mike Houston first. Mike decided that it wasn't my old psoriasis after all — but he prescribed some lotion anyway. He sent me to some idiot Park Avenue specialist in New York — a dermatologist — who decided it wasn't a new strain of herpes — but he gave me some shots, just in case. And the doctors at the clinic in Boston decided that it was definitely not cancerous — but they irradiated me. (Beat) None of them could stop it. When I die, they'll fight over who gets to name it.

Beat. Rawhide-Cary lights another cigarette.

BILLY
And I know when it started. It started the day you saved my ass in court. The day that old Gypsy came after you outside the restaurant.

RAWHIDE-CARY
There's something I'm not following here.

BILLY
The old man poked you, right here —

Billy jabs himself in the solar plexus.

BILLY (cont'd)
And that's where you said it started. It started right where Lemke touched you.

RAWHIDE-CARY
Oh God, why didn't I think of it? I can just call up Mike Houston and get him to prescribe something that works on your basic Gypsy curse.

BILLY
Lemke touched me, too. That's when I started to lose weight. And I can't stop, Cary. We're in the same boat.

RAWHIDE-CARY
Not exactly. You don't have to sit in the bathtub all day, do you? You go out in public, don't you?

BILLY
Maybe there's something we can do —

Rawhide-Cary stubs out his lighted cigarette on his stomach.

RAWHIDE-CARY
There's something <u>you</u> can do, Billy. You can get the hell out of my house. And don't come back till you've lost another seventy pounds. So I can see somebody who looks as bad as I do. 'Cause I need a good laugh.

CUT T

INT: BILLY'S OFFICE -- LAW OFFICES -- DAY

Billy is packing a briefcase full of work. Penschley slouches on the couch playing a hand-held video game.

BILLY
It's called the Glassman Clinic.

PENSCHLEY
Never heard of it. Look, don't bother taking that stuff with you.

BILLY
I'm only going to be gone three days. And that pre-school liability case picks up again on Tuesday.

PENSCHLEY
Ron Baker's going to take care of that. I want you to concentrate on getting well.

BILLY
I'm not sick. I have a nutritional disorder which is atypically symptomatic.

PENSCHLEY
Billy, you're shedding pounds like a dead dog sheds fleas.

CUT TO

EXT: NEW JERSEY COUNTRYSIDE — DAY

The Halleck Chrysler tools through lovely woodland New Jersey.

INT: CHRYSLER — DAY — SAME TIME

Heidi's driving, of course. She's grim. Billy's eating Ritz crackers straight out of the 16-oz jumbo box.

BILLY
Tell me something, Heidi.

HEIDI
What?

BILLY
Up at Mohonk, the first night we were there, you refused to — ah — to perform the oral sex act on me, as we lawyer-types say in court.

HEIDI
Billy —

BILLY
— but on the way back from Mohonk you grabbed that zipper faster than you can say Jack Robinson. (Ironic) Remember? Just before the accident?

HEIDI
(Guarded) Yeah. So — ?

BILLY
(Bitter) So why did you choose that particular moment to ... uh ... go down on me?

Billy points to a discreet sign announcing THE GLASSMAN CLINIC. Through the trees, the clinic itself is visible: one-story, brick, set deep among the pines. Privately funded, it's in the vanguard of nutritional research.

Heidi makes a sharp turn into the driveway of the institution.

HEIDI
What are you trying to say? That it's my fault that old Gypsy bitch is dead? I was the one who blew your whistle — so I'm guilty?! You're not responsible, and I am?! Next it'll be my fault you're losing all this weight!

BILLY
HEIDI WATCH OUT!

Heidi has to whip the wheel in order to avoid colliding with a CHARLES RIVER LABORATORY ANIMALS truck, heading out from the loading dock.

Heidi slams on brakes, and stops on the road shoulder. The truck blows its horn in protest, and passes on. Heidi leans breathless over the wheel.

BILLY
(Quiet) We're there.

CUT TO:

INT: SOLARIUM -- GLASSMAN CLINIC -- DAY

Billy is in a brightly-colored jumpsuit with loose legs and loose arms. Ensconced in a lawn chair among the palms, he's drinking a labeled Barium Solution through a straw.

A RED-HEADED NURSE is pricking one of his fingers for blood smears. A SECOND NURSE — burly and bearded — is measuring his arm wattles with calipers. Heidi is signing documents in triplicate. She looks anxious to be on her way.

HEIDI
What am I signing?

BILLY
In case there's a medical emergency... Why don't you ask Linda if she can give up New York for a few days...?

HEIDI
I don't mind being alone.

BILLY
Heidi, before you go, would you mind calling the Fairview Police station and see if Duncan Hopley is around. I really want to talk to him.

HEIDI
No, Billy, what you really need is to concentrate on your problem. (Beat) Listen, you aren't going to be making a lot of calls, are you? The whole world doesn't have to know you're here.

Billy smiles a cold smile.

CUT TO:

INT: BILLY'S ROOM -- GLASSMAN CLINIC -- DAY

It looks like a businessman's suite in a Sheraton: roomy, with the sitting room portion bigger than the sleeping portion. But here the refrigerator is locked, the scales aren't relegated to the bathroom, there's a table with computer and printer attached, and the view of the woods outside is quite lovely.

Billy sits with his feet up on the coffee table, watching television. Billy's lost another ten pounds. He's close to his ideal weight, but his skin is loose, discolored, sagging. He still moves like a fat man.

He's doggedly plowing through one of several bowls of snacks laid out in front of him — each of them on a carefully balanced inlaid scales.

AT A DESK —

A CLERIC is typing data into a computer. The heading on the computer and the data both read DAY 6.

Two DOCTORS enter. The TALL DOCTOR is senior and solemn. Second-in-Command is a FEMALE DOCTOR, who's energetic and constantly smiling.

Billy gets up and meets them halfway across the room.

BILLY
So? What's the diagnosis?

With a look from the DOCTORS, the Cleric discreetly exits.

TALL DOCTOR
Mr Halleck, I'd say we need about two more weeks with you, three at the outside.

BILLY
To cure me or to study me?

FEMALE DOCTOR
Billy, in order to cure you we have to study you completely!

BILLY
I've been here five days — I've lost eleven pounds! I may not have three weeks!

FEMALE DOCTOR
And that's the other reason you want to stay here! If you keep dropping, you can expect to develop lesions in the mouth, major skin problems, and on and on. You know what scurvy is? Beri-beri?

TALL DOCTOR
You'll find yourself extremely susceptible to infection — everything from a cold to influenza to bronchitis to tuberculosis. Tuberculosis, Mr Halleck.

BILLY
And if I stay here, I get more tests and then you put me on a life support system, and you give me even more tests. But I don't get cured, right?

FEMALE DOCTOR
We don't know what's wrong with you yet!

BILLY
But I do have a good idea...

CUT TO:

INT: HOPLEY'S HOUSE -- DUSK

Modest home, landscaped for minimal upkeep -- that is, for a man who lives alone. Billy — wearing jeans and a t-shirt reading Meat Me at the Fairview Steak House — get out of his rental car and goes to the front door. He rings and knocks at the front door.

BILLY
Duncan, open the door!

No response.

BILLY (cont'd)
It's Billy Halleck! Are you in there?. .
Are you okay?!

Still no response. Billy starts moving around the house, peering into the windows. Still calling out:

BILLY (cont'd)
Because I'm not! I'm losing weight and
I'm not on a diet!

He rounds the corner of the house. Another window.

BILLY (cont'd)
I pig out like I never pigged out before
and I'm <u>still</u> losing two pounds a day!

Another window yet.

BILLY (cont'd)
And it's not just me, Hopley! Cary
Rossington —

The window is suddenly jerked open from inside. Hopley's face and form and dim and indistinct in the darkness within the house.

HOPLEY
Him too? Well, you might as well come on
in, Billy...

CUT TO:

INT: HALLWAY -- HOPLEY'S HOUSE -- DUSK -- MOMENTS LATER

It's long, dark, windowless, with closed doors on either side. Hopley, wearing long-sleeves, a high collar, and gloves, leads the way to the study at the end. Billy can only see Hopley from the back.

HOPLEY
So the Judge is all dried up, hunh? He
always was anyway. And you finally found
a diet that works.

BILLY
You don't have to sound so glad about it.

HOPLEY
Yeah but you two deserve it, 'cause you ran the old woman down, and Rossington fixed it so you didn't even get points taken off your driving record. (Beat) But why'd that old Gypsy fuck have to come after me?

BILLY
Probably because you testified at the hearing. Look — I'm not saying the three of us were right, but nobody was really lying, and the whole thing just wasn't our fault!

They enter...

INT: STUDY -- HOPLEY'S HOUSE -- DUSK -- CONTINUOUS ACTION

Hopley sits at his desk, with his back to the windows, and the sunset behind him. His face is in deep shadow, his ruined hands hidden as well. Billy sits in the interviewee's chair.

HOPLEY
Oh right. I forgot. Susanna Lemke was jaywalking! You're gonna tell this guy his daughter's dead because she didn't stop and look both ways.

BILLY
Yes! I want to find him and confront him and tell him we don't deserve this! That's why I cam to see you. Where did the Gypsies go when they left Fairview?

Hopley suddenly reach up and turns on a lamp. Revealed in all its lurid glory is...

HOPLEY'S FACE —

a puff-upped landscape of pimples, blackheads, boils and infected abscesses. Billy stares in shock and revulsion.

Hopley smiles grimly, but blandly goes on to answer Billy's question:

HOPLEY
I don't know where the Gypsies went. And you've got to do this yourself, because you are the one who started it.

Hopley takes a gun from the desk drawer and offers it to Billy.

HOPLEY (cont'd)
Find him Billy! Make him take the curse off me, and you, and Cary. Then kill the bastard and say it's from me!

Billy refuses the gun, gets up, and hurries out. As he races down the hall, Hopley calls after him.

HOPLEY (o.s.)
It's too late, Billy! You know it's too late! But kill the bastard anyway!

CUT TO

EXT: FRONT OF HOPLEY HOUSE — DUSK

Billy flings open the front door and rushes out to his car. He turns the ignition, slams it into gear, and takes off driving in a destructive arc across the lawn.

As Billy drives out of frame, the front door is pushed softly shut. A beat of silence. Then, O.S. ...

A SINGLE SHOT

CUT TO:

INT: HALLECK HOUSE -- NIGHT

Halleck comes in the front door. The house is unlighted, but Heidi has evidently been waiting on the stairs.

HEIDI
Why didn't you stay at the Clinic? They wanted you to stay!

BILLY
Heidi, they weren't helping me.

HEIDI
Billy, I don't know how to take care of you!

BILLY
I'm not asking you to.

Coldly interrupting him, Heidi heads for the kitchen.

HEIDI
I fixed you a snack.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — NIGHT

Heidi has laid out more than a snack for him: thick sandwiches, chips and dips, non-diet sodas, and the like. As Billy scarfs it down, he leafs through the books on Gypsies that Linda bought earlier.

Heidi enters, clicking off the remote phone.

HEIDI
That was Mike Houston. Duncan Hopley committed suicide.

BILLY
I'm not surprised. I stopped in to see him this afternoon, just before I came home.

HEIDI
(Bewildered) You were over there today?!

BILLY
Lemke — that old Gypsy man — he went after Duncan too.

Billy turns to a new chapter in the book on the table. It's called:

Love Portions and Curses
Secret Gypsy Lore

HEIDI
Billy are you saying that the Gypsies put a curse on Duncan Hopley... and on you?! And that's why you're losing weight?!

Billy indicates the massive amount of food laid out before him.

BILLY
I'm not on a diet, Heidi. And it's not a mental disorder. And it's not a tapeworm. I've been eating like this for over six weeks! Six thousand calories a day — at least — and I still lose two pounds every twenty-four hours!

Heidi sits still for a moment, taking it in. Then she responds quietly:

HEIDI
You're not talking like this to anybody else, are you?

CUT TO:

EXT: METHODIST CHURCH -- FAIRVIEW -- DAY

There's been a memorial service for Duncan Hopley. Billy and Heidi come out just ahead of Michael Houston. Heidi goes off and Billy corners the doctor.

HOUSTON
Billy I saw him! I checked him out and yeah he had some lesions on the back of his neck and so forth but he's had acne since — did you ever see his yearbook picture?

BILLY
But his face...

Houston opens his mouth wide, and sticks his middle finger up against the roof of his mouth.

HOUSTON
He stuck a .357 right here. What face?

CUT TO

INT: DEN — HALLECK'S HOUSE — TWILIGHT

Billy is sitting up in a recliner, studying another book on Gypsies. Now there's a stack of them beside the chair. On the television, Maria Ouspenskaya is giving a Gypsy warning in an old Universal horror film.

Through the windows, outside, we can see Heidi. She been sipping a drink on the patio, at the end of a long hot summer day.

Heidi enters with her empty glass and the remote phone.

HEIDI
Do you want to talk to someone named Deever?

BILLY
Yes! He's helping me do some research...

As she hands Billy the phone, she inadvertently knocks over the pile of books.

HEIDI
Let me guess... Is the firm paying for this, or does it come out of our pockets?

Billy doesn't answer her, but gets right on the phone.

BILLY
(Into Phone) Hey Deever — whatever you got — why don't you bring it straight on over?

Heidi exits into the kitchen.

BILLY (cont'd)
(Into phone) Oh all right, but make it first thing in the morning.

He clicks off the phone, and reaches down to right the books. He gets a sudden spasm in his chest and he gasps harshly for breath.

Heidi re-enters with a freshened drink just as Billy has recovered himself.

HEIDI
Do you mind sleeping down here again tonight? It's hot and you've become very bony.

CUT TO

INT: BILLY'S OFFICE -- LAW OFFICES -- MORNING

At his desk, Billy is examining a map of New England which has been marked with a red route, with annotations of date and uncertainty.

Across from him is DEEVER — the investigator who produced Billy's surprise witness in court. Deever is delivering highlights of his report on the Gypsies.

DEEVER
Raintree of course, as soon as they left here. Then Milford, then Greeno — which I had never even heard of. Then 43 Gypsies totally disappear for three days. Turn up in Pawtucket, but now there's 47 of 'em. Then you can't find 'em again — these guys wear real soft shoes.

During this Billy has been going through other pieces of evidence: more photographs of the various members of the tribe, their vehicles and plates.

BILLY
And after that on to... Lincoln, Mass? This the same group every time, you're sure?

DEEVER
Yeah. For some reason people seem to notice this hundred-year-old guy with a big black cancer in the middle of his face.

Billy abruptly holds up a photograph of Lemke taken with a telephoto lens.

BILLY
What else do you know about Lemke?

DEEVER
For starters? He was a Draft Dodger — in World War I.

A button on Billy's phone lights up. O.S. a faint RING.

INT: RECEPTION — BILLY'S OFFICE — DAY — SAME TIME

Jillian has answered the incoming call:

JILLIAN
I'm sorry, he's in a meeting right now. (Listens) Yes, of course I'll take the message. (Listens) Yes of course I gave him your other messages!

RESUME INT: BILLY'S OFFICE

The Investigator is putting up his notes and charts, preparing to go.

DEEVER
But we're less than a week behind them now. They usually hit Boothbay and they're always in Bar Harbor for Labor Day weekend. But between now and then they could be anywhere.

The Investigator goes to the door, Billy following. But as the Investigator reaches for the knob, he is met by a distraught Jillian.

JILLIAN
Billy, it's the Glassman Clinic again. This is their third call today. Line 2.

As the Investigator exits, Billy grabs the phone, punches in line two, and barks into it (as if speaking to Jillian):

BILLY
(Into phone) Tell 'em to go screw the fucking cat scan. I'm not posing for anybody's Before & After shots!

Penschley, having heard from just outside the door, comes inside.

PENSCHLEY
Hell, Billy, why don't you go? Your Bar insurance'll take care of everything!

Billy starts to retort, but then an idea occurs to him. He calms instantly.

BILLY
You're right. I think I need to take a little time off.

Penschley grins — he's not sorry to be rid of his unstable partner.

CUT TO

INT: BEDROOM — HALLECK HOUSE — MORNING — SAME TIME

Houston has been giving Billy a cursory check-up here. While Billy once more tries to find clothes that aren't too big for him, the doctor sits on the edge of the bed, and Heidi packs Billy's bag.

HOUSTON
It's not about your mind, Billy, it's about your brain.

HEIDI
There's just a chemical imbalance — because you've lost so much weight. And there's no treatment involved —

HOUSTON
Just testing.

BILLY
You two really are in sync on this.

HOUSTON
It's for your sake...

HEIDI
It's for your own good...

BILLY
Enough already — you see me packing, don't you?

He snaps the case shut.

CUT T(

EXT: HALLECK HOUSE — MORNING — MINUTES LATER

Heidi stands in the driveway. Mike Houston is pulling out in his snazzy Porsche so that Billy can get his car out. Billy stops his car alongside the Porsche.

BILLY
Since when did you make house calls?

HOUSTON
Wanted to make sure you got off okay, Billy-Boy.

Billy leaves, immediately turning a corner and disappearing.

Houston pulls the Porsche back into the driveway. He quickly gets out and follows Heidi back into the house.

CUT TO

EXT: THREE BROTHERS RESTAURANT — DAY

Billy's car is parked out in front of the harborside restaurant.

INT: THREE BROTHERS RESTAURANT -- DAY

Billy, looking gaunt and nervous, is hurriedly finishing off a large bowl of clam chowder and a larger basket of crackers. Beside him in this corner booth, Ginelli nurses a cup of black coffee and looks at Billy closely.

GINELLI
You said you wanted to ask me something.

BILLY
Yeah, I do. (Beat) Are you superstitious?

GINELLI
Me? You ask an old wop like me if I'm superstitious? Growing up in a family where my mother and my grandmother and all my aunts went around Hail-Marying and praying to saints you never heard of to protect 'em from the Evil Eye every time a crow flew over the house? You ask me a question like that?

BILLY
Yeah. 'Cause I wanna know.

Ginelli sees that Billy is serious. He takes a breath, and goes on, his voice quite flat and simple.

GINELLI
(Flat) Here's what it's really all about, Billy. I believe in two things: I believe in — I believe in what I can see. The other thing I believe in? I believe what my friends tell me is true. You tell me something, William Halleck, I believe in it. (Beat) Heard you had some trouble over in Fairview. But you were... protected, right?

BILLY
Not entirely. You know the woman I hit — the one who died — you know who she was?

GINELLI
Old Gypsy crow, right?

BILLY
Yeah, she was old. But her father's still alive. His name is Lemke, and he made some trouble for me.

GINELLI
And that's what this is really all about...

BILLY
(Nodding) Yeah. I'm going after him. Soon as I leave here.

Ginelli slides out of the booth, followed by Billy. Billy looks small and weak next to the robust Ginelli.

GINELLI
Okay, but if you find out you can't handle this thing on your own — if that old Gypsy bastard starts making more trouble, you give me a call.

They exit the front doors of the restaurant into...

EXT: PARKING LOT — THREE BROTHERS RESTAURANT — DAY — CONT ACTION

Billy heads for his car, pulling out his keys. Ginelli takes the keys away.

GINELLI
When you go after that old Gypsy bastard, don't be driving the car that killed his daughter.

Ginelli hands Billy another set of keys. He points to a solid, but decade-old Oldsmobile.

BILLY
Thanks.

Billy gets his bag from his own car, and then heads for the Oldsmobile.

CUT TO:

EXT: MYSTIC SAVINGS — DAY

In Mystic Connecticut. Billy's Cutlass is parked out front.

INT: MYSTIC SAVINGS — DAY

Billy stands in front of an American Express Traveller's Cheques dispenser, sticking in one AmEx card after another. The Traveller's Cheques fan-fold out in a pile on the counter.

BILLY (V.O.)
Dear Heidi: By the time you read this, I'll be gone. I don't know exactly where, and I don't know for how long...

EXT: ROUTE 95 NORTH -- DAY

The Cutlass crosses the beautiful border between Connecticut and Rhode Island.

BILLY (V.O.)
... but I hope that when I come back, all of this will be over. This nightmare we've been living with.

EXT: MacDONALD'S -- WOBURN MASSACHUSETTS -- DAY

Billy has stopped at a MacDonald's just underneath the State House dome. He eats outside, sitting in the open door of the passenger side. There's a toxic waste treatment plant on the other side of the ornamental fence.

BILLY (V.O.)
I guess you've realized by now that I'm not on my way to the Glassman Clinic. The fact is, I'm trying to track down Taduz Lemke...

INT: A FACTORY OUTLET CLOTHING STORE -- REVERE MASS -- DAY

At the check-out counter, Billy is buying the next smaller size clothing. He pays by Traveller's Cheque.

BILLY (V.O.)
The only person who can lift the curse is the man who put the curse on me.

EXT: FACTORY OUTLET CLOTHING STORE -- REVERE MASS -- DAY

Billy's rented Cutlass looks right at home in this parking lot. Billy opens his suitcase, tosses out what's there, and puts in the new, smaller-sized items.

BILLY (V.O.)
Losing weight like this brings out the worst in me — and sometimes I wish you were down in Hell with me.

EXT: PORTSMOUTH NH -- EARLY EVENING

Approaching the bridge, with signs reading <u>95 NORTH -- MAINE, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, THE MARITIMES</u>.

BILLY (V.O.)
The truth is, you're responsible for Susanna Lemke's death too.

EXT: THE PORTSMOUTH HILTON -- PORTSMOUTH NH -- EARLY EVENING

Billy's Cutlass heads into the underground parking garage.

BILLY (V.O.)
Whatever happens to me, we both deserve it.

INT: BILLY'S ROOM -- THE PORTSMOUTH HILTON -- NIGHT

When the bathroom door opens, steam billows out. Billy shuffles out the doorway in a thick terrycloth robe. As he dries his hair, the sleeves of the robe slip revealing arms with sagging, discolored flesh.

BILLY (V.O.)
I love you, Heidi. Tell Linda how much I love her.

He spasms with sharp pains in the joints of his arms. The brush flies out of his hand. When he catches himself, his robe falls open in front.

CU: BILLY'S EXPRESSION OF DESPAIR —

as he sees his naked body reflected in the full-length mirror.

BILLY (V.O.)
I'll be home as soon as I can. Love, BILLY...

CUT TO

INT: KITCHEN -- HALLECK HOUSE -- NIGHT

Heidi paces with the remote phone. She's holding Billy's letter.

HEIDI (Into Phone)
Mike, you're not gonna believe this one. Would you please come over. (Listens) Okay, just as soon as you can.

She clicks off the remote and heads straight for the sink.

HEIDI
Damn you, Billy! Damn you to Hell!

She crushes the letter and pokes it down the garbage disposal. Runs water. Flicks on the switch.

CUT TO

EXT: SEASIDE FAIR -- EARLY EVENING

Small, tawdry, cheap, and probably a whole lot of fun. The Cutlass cruises the aisles of the municipal parking lot across Highway 1 from the arcades and tents. He slams on brakes when he sees...

THE GYPSY CARAVAN VEHICLES --

all parked in a group here. As one car leaves, Billy swings into its space so fast he scrapes bumpers.

Billy gets out, and we see him in his new K-Mart Blue Light Polyester Special outfit. He looks over the tops of the cars towards the Fairground.

BILLY
I smell you, old man...

From across the way, a high-pitched male voice cackles:

LEMKE (O.S.)
Guess your Weight and Tell Your Fate!

EXT: THE SEASIDE FAIR -- EVENING

Next to a Test-Your-Strength column is a platform with inset floor scales. Lemke sits in a chair beside Gina, as she touts his skills to a sparse crowd.

GINA
Guess your Weight! If he's off by more than five pounds...

Billy comes closer. But Gina, as if expecting him, turns and grins right at him...

GINA (cont'd)
... then you get the dollaya choice!

In the booth behind her are three rows of dolls: an Acne-Atrocity doll for Duncan Hopley, an Alligator-Boy doll for Cary Rossington, and a Skeleton-Scout for Billy Halleck.

LEMKE
78 pounds. On the day he died.

GINA
You lose mister, but have a prize anyway.

She tosses Billy the Skeleton Doll. Billy blocks it with his forearm, then breaks into a run. Gina pulls a slingshot from her pocket, and then takes off after him.

AT THE TWO-LANE ROAD —

Billy pauses to look back before he runs across to the parking lot. Gina is behind him. She grins, takes something from her pocket, and places it in the leather sling.

Billy turns and runs across the two-lane — right into the path of...

A BLACK MERCEDES —

which bears down on him mercilessly. Billy stands transfixed in its path. Suddenly he looks to the side.

GINA —

is about to fire her shiny missile at him.

THE MERCEDES —

continues to bear down on him.

GINA —

releases the ball bearing.

BILLY —

ducks and leaps to the side, trying to avoid both.

THE BALL BEARING —

smashes a window in the Mercedes. The Mercedes skids, and brakes, missing Billy. The passenger door is flung open.

ROSSINGTON (O.S.)
Get in, you idiot!

BILLY
Cary...?

Another window of the Mercedes is smashed. Billy jumps in. The car takes off. Gina runs into the road and fires another shot.

INT: MERCEDES

Rossington, normal-looking, is driving with a grim smile. The landscape is lushly green and rocky.

ROSSINGTON
What did you expect, Billy? We killed his daughter. We're going to die.

BILLY
Where are we going?

ROSSINGTON
There's a map in the glove compartment.

Billy opens the glove compartment. An Alligator-Boy doll falls out into Billy's lap. When he turns back, Rossington is...

ALLIGATOR-CARY —

and his affliction has been carried to a nightmarish extreme. Billy stares in horror. Alligator-Cary grins, and turns the wheel directly into the path of...

AN EIGHTEEN-WHEELER —

barreling down the highway towards them.

BILLY
No!

Billy grabs the wheel and whips it towards the right.

EXT: TWO-LANE ROAD — DAY — CONT ACTION

The 18-Wheeler passes with a blare of horn. The Mercedes leaps the gravel shoulder and smashes into the cut wall of stone.

The Mercedes explodes into flames.

CUT TO:

INT: HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

It was a dream, of course, and Billy snaps upright in bed. He reaches immediately for his address book and the phone. He unsteadily dials.

BILLY
(Into phone) Leda? This is Billy Halleck.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — ROSSINGTON HOUSE -- MORNING

Leda cradles the phone on her shoulder as she fills the dish washer with dirty highball glasses. Her sarcasm is subtle and bland.

LEDA
Sorry, Billy. Cary can't come to the phone right now. Yesterday, he drove the Mercedes into the side of a mountain. Apparently he had decided on cremation.

INT: HOTEL ROOM

Billy shakes his head.

BILLY
(Into phone) Leda, I'm so sorry —

RESUME INT: ROSSINGTON KITCHEN

Leda hangs up the phone. Then...

LEDA
Don't be.

CUT TO:

EXT: SEASIDE FAIR -- EARLY EVENING

Exactly as in his dream earlier, the fair is small, tawdry, cheap, and probably a whole lot of fun. Exactly as in his dream, the Cutlass cruises the aisles of the municipal parking lot across Highway 1 from the arcades and tents.

INT: THE CUTLASS — SAME TIME

Billy shakes his head as he turns the car into the same empty space he had found in the dream.

BILLY
(Serious) I hate déjá vu...

CUT T

EXT: SEASIDE FAIR — DAY

Pretty much as Billy saw it in his dream. But the dolls that are prizes at the Guess Your Weight stand are the usual Taiwanese Trash. Instead of the Weight Guessing platform, there is now...

THE FREAK TENT —

no freaks visible, just the posters, including Mister Skeleton next to The Collosal Man — like Billy After and Billy Before.

Someone peers out from behind the cloth curtain of the Freak Tent, but Bill doesn't wait to see who it is. He strides off down the beach, heading for an old-fashioned cocktail lounge called The Seven Seas.

CUT T(

INT: THE SEVEN SEAS LOUNGE — DAY

The tinted windows look out on the Seaside Fair. Billy is showing an old man (ENDERS) the photographs of the gypsies.

When Billy shows the PHOTOGRAPH OF LEMKE, Enders queasily turns the picture face down.

CU: THE BACK OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

Info typed on a label identifies the old man as TADUZ LEMKE.

ENDERS
How do you say that?

BILLY
Tah-Doush, I think.

ENDERS
Teddy. Knew Teddy when he was here twenty years ago. Saw him last week. Looked exactly the same. He remembered me, too. Called me by my Secret Name.

BILLY
Secret Name?

ENDERS
You got a name on your birth certificate, but a man's also got a name tattooed in a secret place — on his heart maybe, or maybe in his groin. Teddy Lemke called me Flash — my army name, and everybody else who ever called me that is dead.

Enders begins to tremble, knocks over his beer glass. Billy calls out to the Bartender.

BILLY
Could we have another? (To Enders) Go on...

ENDERS
Told me, "Flash — say hello to your wife from Teddy." I told him my wife was dead. "So why you no put up gravestone for her like good husband?" he says, and Mister — I didn't put up a gravestone yet.

Enders stares at Billy with tears in his eyes.

The Bartender comes over, protective of Enders, and very unfriendly towards Billy.

BARTENDER
I want you to get out of here. I don't like your looks.

BILLY
I will. Where'd the Gypsies go after they left here?

ENDERS
I watched 'em, Mister! Out Route 27 and turned right on Route 1.

BARTENDER
Rockland, probably, so get out, Mister, 'cause you look like bad luck waiting for a place to happen.

Billy puts down a twenty and gets up. Enders starts to get up after him, but the Bartender holds him down.

ENDERS
If you got a secret, Mister, don't let Teddy find out what it is!

Billy heads out. Breaking down, Enders calls after Billy, nearly frantic:

ENDERS (cont'd)
He called me by my Secret Name and I pissed all the way down my leg!

Billy exits, without looking back.

CUT TO

EXT: FALMOUTH POST OFFICE — DAY

At a window marked General Deliveries, Billy shows the clerk his I.D. and is handed an Express Mail envelope to sign for. Billy's only been on the road a couple of days, and lost about five pounds — but he drags and slumps.

After signing the form for the overnight package, he walks over to an empty counter and rips open the package, removing a file.

CUT TO:

INT: LAW OFFICES -- DAY

Jillian takes her coffee cup and walks away from her desk. Penschley goes up to Jillian's Out Box, thumbs through a second, and removes the Express mail duplicate. He copies down the address, replaces the slip, and goes to his adjoining office. His SECRETARY hands him a note.

SECRETARY
Mr Deever called back. He left this number. Isn't this the detective that Mr Halleck hired?

PENSCHLEY
(Obviously lying) Never heard of the guy. (Beat) But try him at that number.

CUT TO:

EXT: A USED CAR LOT — NIGHT

It's totally downscale. Chop shop rejects, a towing service, a vicious Doberman leaping at the closed driver's window of Billy's Cutlass. On the passenger side a very FAT BLONDE WOMAN finishes marking up a map. She hands it inside the car to Billy, then brings away a $100-Traveller's-Cheque.

CUT TO:

EXT: PARKING LOT OF A BURNED-OUT WAREHOUSE — DAY

A scorched cinder-block shell in the middle of a vast parking lot. The on car in it is Billy's. Billy himself, clutching his sheaf of xeroxes, walk about the empty lot looking for clues.

BILLY
I smell you, old man.

Billy surveys the detritus of the recently dismantled Gypsy camp.

CUT

INT: UPSTAIRS HALLWAY — HALLECK HOUSE — DAY

The doors to the Master Bedroom and to Linda's bedroom are open. The PHON RINGS. Through the open doorway we see Linda as she lurches for it.

LINDA
Hello? ... Hello, is anyone there?

Sound O.S. of TOILET FLUSHING. Heidi comes out of the bathroom.

HEIDI
Lin? Is that Billy?

BILLY (filtered)
I don't want to talk to your mother.

LINDA
(Into phone) But you'll talk to me, won't you?

Heidi suddenly reaches round and grabs the phone out of Linda's hand.

HEIDI
Billy, you've got to get some help. You can't just —

Evidently at this point, Billy breaks the connection. Heidi slams down the phone and stalks out.

LINDA
You don't <u>want</u> Daddy to come back, do you?!

Heidi enters her bedroom and slams shut the door.

CUT T

EXT: BOOTHBAY HARBOR — DAY

Quaint, but definitely more upscale than what we've seen in Maine heretofore. Next to a high-priced clothing store specializing in wind-breakers, there's a little lean-to of a shop, with a sign reading: QUIGLEY SEASONAL RENTALS / Biff Quigley Owner.

INT: QUIGLEY SEASONAL RENTALS — DAY — SAME TIME

Biff QUIGLEY's place is a little downscale for Boothbay Harbor, but that is where the Gypsies would go. Quigley himself is also a little downscale for Boothbay Harbor, too florid for forty, and with a laugh that is snappish. Billy sits across from him.

QUIGLEY
Man, I just have to say it: You look like an advertisement for a vacation in Biafra.

BILLY
Thanks. I just wanna know if you have seen a troop of Gypsies passing through here.

QUIGLEY
I can tell you where the fucking Gypsies are this very minute but it'll cost you two hundred bucks.

BILLY
What?

QUIGLEY
Not the information I give you, that's a freebie. The two hundred's for the information that I <u>don't</u> give your wife and your doctor.

Quigley hands Billy a circular, showing his picture, giving a description and contact numbers for Heidi, Penschley and Houston. There's a $250 reward "for information leading to..."

BILLY
Do you take Traveller's Checks?

CUT TO

EXT: GYPSY CAMP -- NIGHT

In a sheltered field near a stand of Maine pines the Gypsy encampment is arranged in concentric circles -- the scruffy vehicles form the circle, inside that men and women in aluminum lawn chairs, and centermost a few children around a circle of stones delimiting the communal fire, burning in a hole dug in the earth.

The men are smoking and telling dirty jokes, the women are gossiping and pasting in Green Stamps, and the children are practicing card tricks and pocket-picking.

Suddenly everyone goes silent. Then abruptly the young woman...

GINA --

flings herself across the circle, screaming hysterically in Rom — that is, Romish, the secretive language of this nomadic people.

GINA
-- ta mig mamma! Va dybbuk! Ta mig inte till mormor! Ordo! Vu' derlak!

With anger and disgust she's pointing at something just outside the circle of flickering light. This fury is directed at...
BILLY —

whom we see when he steps quietly forward into the circle of light. He has a long overcoat wrapped around him. Gina is on him about to attack, but is stopped by a sharp command from behind her:

LEMKE (o.s.)
So hon lagt, Gina!

Lemke steps into the circle of light directly opposite from Billy. Her passion bridled by the old man, Gina snarls in Billy's face:

GINA
You don't understand our lingo, mister? I say to my old-papa that you killed my old-mamma! I say you are a demon and we should kill you!

Before she backs away, Gina spits in Billy face. This isn't merely a gesture somehow: her spittle is thick and glabrous.

GINA (CONT)
Skummade igenom.

As she stalks away, the old man Lemke comes closer. Billy's tone when he speaks is almost conversational.

BILLY
Skummade igenom — What's that mean in Rom? Sounds like "Ignorant Scum".

LEMKE
Skummade igenom — yeah, that's you. It means "White Man from Town."

Billy smiles a grim smile.

BILLY
That's my secret name, isn't it? "White Man From Town..."

Lemke is startled, and the Gypsies closest to Billy back slowly away.

LEMKE
You have no business with us, so go away, White Man from Town. And we have no business with you.

With a dismissive wave of his hand, Lemke turns his back on Billy.

BILLY
I'm not through!

Billy's challenge to the old man's authority astonishes everyone. Lemke turns slowly around, and glares at Billy.

LEMKE
You are through, white man! Because you start something and I finish it! You run my daught' over in the road, white man! Mostly when something like that happen we turn and we drive out of town. But sometimes we get our justice.

Lemke snaps his fingers in Billy's face. Billy snaps his fingers right back, actually flicking the edges of the hole in the old man's face.

BILLY
When the Police Chief blew his face off — did that bring your daughter back? And when the Judge burned up inside his car —

LEMKE
No! Susanna stays in the ground! Justice ain't bringing back the dead, White Man From Town. Justice is justice.

BILLY
Fuck your justice. Take it off me. Take your fucking curse off my head.

Billy grabs the old man by the shoulders and draws him closer. Every man in the camp is about to attack Billy -- but they're stopped by a hand sign from Lemke.

LEMKE
Let go of me or I make it worse. So much worse you tink I blessed you the first time.

At first it looks as if the old man might have won this round, but suddenly Billy grins his widest grin.

BILLY
Go ahead. Try. But you know, I don't think you can.

Lemke stares back wordlessly.

BILLY (cont)
Because I helped do it to myself. Sure, I ran over Susanna Lemke and that's my fault. But she walked right out between two parked cars and that's her fault. You put a curse on me, and I let myself be cursed. Not the best balance in the history of the world, maybe, but it balances. Let it end here.

LEMKE
I never take it off, white man from town. I die widdit in my mout.

BILLY
So do it right now! Die with the curse in your mouth. And let me watch.

For the first time, Lemke himself trembles. He turns away, and barks a final order.

LEMKE
Get him out of here.

BILLY
You think men like me don't have the power to curse? We have the power. We're good at cursing once we get started, old man. You don't want my curse.

The Gypsies are still and silent, frightened. Here and there the women make the sign against the Evil Eye, the Men spit. Lemke pauses on the steps of his van, not yet going in. Then suddenly...

BILLY —

is wracked by a sudden pain somewhere under his ribs. He rips open his overcoat to get at the spasm revealing — ludicrously — that he's wearing a t-shirt and Bermudas.

Since we last saw his body, he's lost another fifteen pounds. It doesn't look good: in places bones show through, in other places folds of loose skin bunch and hang. And he stands off-kilter, a little twisted because of the pain in his joints.

BILLY
I'm leaving, old man. But when I go, I'll be leaving a curse behind me. The curse of the white man from town, and it's on you and it's on everybody I can see by the light of this fire.

There's a flash of movement behind Lemke.

LEMKE
Gina!

Gina steps out of the shadows and into the light. She raises a slingshot, draws back the cradle, and sights towards Billy.

GINA
Enkelt! Get out of here, evelak! Get out of here, killing bastard!

Billy holds up his hand as if that would ward off her shot.

Gina releases the sling, so quickly and expertly we barely catch that the missile was silverish, smooth, globular.

Billy screams in pain, and holds his hand tight between his thighs. Shaking he pulls his hand out again and holds it up to the light of the center fire.

There's a hole in his hand. Right through the center of the palm.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT: GINELLI HOUSE -- NIGHT

Expensive, very up-scale neighborhood. Phone rings O.S.

GINELLI (o.s.)
(Sleepy) Yeah...?

INT: BEDROOM -- GINELLI HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ginelli's in bed with a buxom blonde, except in this case she's Ginelli's WIFE. Ginelli's on the phone.

GINELLI
Fuck late. Tell me what's wrong, Billy.

Ginelli gooses his Wife to rouse her.

GINELLI (cont)
Jesus, a slingshot?!

Ginelli's Wife hands him an address book. He opens it and starts going through it as he talks to Billy on the phone.

GINELLI (cont)
Okay, Billy, the Better Half's gonna make a couple of calls.

He points out a couple of names. His Wife nods and takes the address book into the other room.

GINELLI (cont)
Yeah, you're welcome, just shut up and sit still. I'm sending somebody up there to look you over. He's not a doctor but he's pretty damned close.

Ginelli hangs up. To himself:

GINELLI (cont)
Goddamned Gypsy queers.

CUT TO

EXT: FRENCHMAN'S BAY MOTEL — BOOTHBAY HARBOR — DAWN

An anonymous in-season place with double-decked wings of identical rooms. Not many cars, but one of them is Billy's Cutlass. Next to it is an idling AIRPORT TAXI. The DRIVER leans on a front fender, slowly turning the pages of a newspaper. He glances towards one of the rooms on the lower level.

INT: BILLY'S MOTEL ROOM — DAWN — SAME TIME

FANDER — Ginelli's "almost-Doctor" — is a little man, prematurely gray, who works out of a country doctor's bag. He has spread out a series of gauzes, disinfectants, and scissors on a table. He unwraps Billy's hand — and Billy twists in terrible pain.

Fander can't resist the opportunity. He peers at Billy through the hole in his palm.

FANDER
A ball bearing, hunh? That's a first for me.

BILLY
I never felt this kind of pain before.

FANDER
There's a reason for that. I worked on cadavers in med school that looked healthier than you.

BILLY
Can you give me something?

FANDER
Codeine'll put you in a coma. Darvon'll send you into cardiac arrhythmia. Looks like I just flew six hundred miles to prescribe a grain and a half of empirin.

He goes through his bag and comes up with a bottle of pills.

FANDER (cont)
And these are mine but you need 'em more. Potassium tablets.

BILLY
Are they gonna help the pain?

FANDER
No they're gonna help you not go into cardiac arrest next time you stand up. Do yourself a favor — give up diet sodas.

As Fander gets up to go, he inadvertently brushes against Billy's bandaged hand. Billy howls in pain.

FANDER
Oh, I almost forgot — you're gonna have a visitor at noon tomorrow.

BILLY
Who?

Fander goes to the door of the hotel room.

FANDER
Take that empirin and get some rest or tomorrow you're not gonna have the strength to answer the door.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL — LATE MORNING

Billy's asleep on the rumpled covers of the bed. There's a light blanket over him, and the way it falls shows his emaciated, bony frame beneath.

There's a loud pounding on the door. Billy rouses, but he's so weak he has trouble getting up.

BILLY
(Hoarse) Who — who is it?

GINELLI'S VOICE (O.S.)
Billy, open the door! It's Richie Ginelli!

Billy finally makes it to the door, and opens it. Billy's genuinely glad to see Ginelli.

BILLY
Oh I just figured you'd send one of your men...

Ginelli pushes past him with a small bag in one hand and a bottle of Chivas in the other.

GINELLI
Nah — this I handle myself. Wanna deaden your gums?

BILLY
Think I'll stick to my Empirin. Thanks for sending the doctor — I think he saved my life. And I'm really glad to see you, though I don't know what you're gonna be able to do.

Ginelli pours himself a plastic cupful of scotch, and throws himself onto one of the single beds.

GINELLI
This time I'm the Counselor. Now you tell me all the facts.

CUT T

EXT: HARDWARE STORE — BOOTHBAY HARBOR — AFTERNOON

Upscale, for people who like to buy the highest quality nuts and bolts. Billy is skulking in the aisles, trying not to be seen by the other customers. He wears layers of clothing, doubling shirts and trousers, adding to his bulk.

At the register, Ginelli has bought two cardboard cartons-worth of hardware goods. Whatever they are, they total $215.45 and he pays the bill with fiv $50-bills. The GIRL-BEHIND-THE-REGISTER nods towards Billy, and in a low voice asks Ginelli:

GIRL-BEHIND-THE-REGISTER
Hey mister, your friend — he a long-distance runner or is he, you know, sick...

Ginelli puts the boxes under his arms, and prepares to leave.

GINELLI
He's a picky eater.

CUT TO

EXT: "DOWNTOWN" BOOTHBAY — AFTERNOON

Billy watches as Ginelli puts the boxes in the trunk of the car.

BILLY
What is all that stuff?

GINELLI
Tools of the trade. I got to go grocery shopping. Why don't you wait here? You look tired.

BILLY
I need a sugar fix.

CUT TO

EXT: CONCESSION STAND — "DOWNTOWN" BOOTHBAY — DAY

A concession stand on a busy corner. But the Tourists gathered here are staring at, and standing back from Billy, who's getting a bag of candy, a tall shake, and several bags of natural chips. The CONCESSION GIRL is very nervous, all too conscious of Billy's appearance and its effect on her other customers.

BILLY
I think you gave me too much change.

CONCESSION GIRL
Look, keep it, and here, have another box of candy — just take it all across the street, okay?

BILLY
(Getting it) Okay, sorry, didn't mean to put a dent in your profits.

But Billy is already crossing the street. He goes to a bench where a TEEN-AGED GIRL is reading TVGuide and her father is reading a thick Boston newspaper.

When Billy sits down the Father and Teen-Aged Girl exchange a glance, and then get up to go. The Father leaves behind several sections of the paper.

BILLY
You through with these?

FATHER
(Very nervous) Here. You can have the whole thing.

He gives Billy the section he was reading, and then hurries away with his daughter. Billy sighs, gathers up his packages, and the paper, and then heads back for the car.

He doesn't look anybody in the eye.

EXT: "DOWNTOWN" BOOTHBAY — DAY — MINUTES LATER

Ginelli comes out of the grocery store with a couple of sacks of groceries. They go into the trunk, and then Ginelli gets into the car and behind the wheel.

INT: GINELLI'S FORD — DAY — CONT ACTION

Billy is industriously wadding up unfolded pages of the Boston newspaper, and stuffing them under his shirt, down his trousers, and up his pants legs'. He looks absurd, though he seems to be feverishly concentrating.

GINELLI
What are you doing?

Billy sighs. He knows it isn't working.

BILLY
Trying to be inconspicuous.

Ginelli laughs good-naturedly.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM — EVENING

The room is messy. Ginelli peers out the window as he murmurs quietly on a cellular phone.

IN THE BATHROOM —

Billy has taken a shower. With a heavy terry-cloth robe on his shoulders, and digging into a new 2-lb box of vanilla wafers, he steps onto the scales. Ginelli enters, clicking off the cellular phone and drops it into his jacket pocket. He pours straight Chivas into another plastic glass, and peers at the numbers on the scales. The scale reads 124.

Ginelli lifts the robe off Billy's shoulders, then snapping his fingers, motions for Billy to hand him the box of vanilla wafers. Guiltily, Billy hands over the box. The scale drops to 119.

BILLY
Yeah. Who was I trying to fool?

GINELLI
(Gently) Billy, ever hear of something called "Committal in Absentia"?

Billy's legal mind is still sharp.

BILLY
Oh sure. It just means somebody's committed to a mental hospital without being examined. It's usually invoked when some guy goes loony and runs off —

The meaning of Ginelli's question suddenly dawns on Billy.

BILLY(cont'd)
Oh great, Heidi thinks my mind's been affected by all the weight I've lost. Oh yeah, and she obviously got that pill-popping freak Mike Houston to sign the order...

Ginelli gently leads Billy to the bed, and gets him under the covers.

GINELLI
Billy, you do know about Heidi and Mike Houston...?

Billy gets it immediately.

BILLY
Oh Christ, you're joking! Oh Jesus this is the capper! No wonder they're sending out wanted posters! Oh this is just —

Ginelli doesn't respond to any of this. Rather he goes to the dresser, and starts doing something with half-a-dozen raw steaks he bought earlier.

BILLY (cont'd)
What the hell are you doing?

Ginelli is dousing some of the steaks with liquid from a blue bottle, and others he rubs with a coarse white powder.

GINELLI
Hey White Man from Town, you never hear of tenderizing your red meat?

BILLY
Looks like nasty stuff. You're not gonna hurt anybody are you?

GINELLI
No. But Billy, if I'm gonna help you, you don't get to ask that question again.

CUT TO:

EXT: DARK ROADSIDE — NIGHT

The Ford is pushed out of sight on a logging track. O.S. a Gypsy lullaby.

FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD —

is the line of parked Gypsy vehicles, two wheels on the asphalt, two wheels on the listing shoulder. A young Gypsy SENTRY, with a holstered revolver and Walkman, patrols along the line of cars. When he has passed out of frame, we see...

GINELLI —

creeping along the outside of the Gypsy vehicles, trying the doors of each. He ducks between two of the vehicles when a car passes along the road. Finally he finds one of the car doors open. He crawls inside.

A MOMENT LATER —

Ginelli crawls out again, wearing a suit jacket much too big for him. He smells the lapel — the coat stinks. He pulls on a pair of pants, and slips into tattered sneakers much too small for him. The moment he transfers the steaks into the pockets of this tattered jacket, the SENTRY reappears. But Ginelli is gone.

THE GYPSY ENCAMPMENT —

is as we saw it before, but there are fewer Gypsies about. The Sentry comes into the firelit circle, and is given a large sandwich and bottle of beer. He leans against a trailer and allows a 10-year-boy to examine his gun.

CUT TO

A BARBED-WIRE DOG-PEN —

outside the Gypsy camp. There are nine Pit Bulls inside, all trained to fight on command. All nine dogs are watching Ginelli's quiet approach.

GINELLI
Do I stink like a Gypsy, guys? Well what fucking Gyp ever gave you a steak for supper? So who wants strychnine? And who gets the uncut heroin?

He dumps the poisoned meat over the top of the fence.

CUT TO:

GINELLI —

dry-smoking a Camel. He sits outside the pen watching as the Pit Bulls teeter and collapse, one by one. He takes out his wallet, removes a hundred-dollar bill, and writes on it with a felt-tipped marker:

The White Man from Town says take off the curse.

He rises, goes towards the pen. Only one of the dogs remains alive. When Ginelli opens the pen's gate, the dog lurches...

THE PIT BULL'S BARED TEETH --

clamp down on the $100-bill with the warning on it.

CUT TO:

EXT: ROAD INTO BAR HARBOR — NIGHT

Two cars on this lonely stretch: Ginelli's Ford in front, and at an even distance behind that, a nondescript pick-up.

INT: GINELLI'S FORD — NIGHT

Ginelli's nervous. Looks in the rearview mirror.

GINELLI
Shit. Could be those fucking Gypsies.

He turns off abruptly into the lot of a semi-rural 7-11.

EXT: 7-11 PARKING LOT — NIGHT — CONT ACTION

Ginelli gets out of his Ford. The Pick-Up he feared was following him passes on. At the rear of the parking lot he notes an old Chevy Nova — its owner, Frank SPURTON, a down-at-the-heels 22 year old, is bundled up in his jacket and asleep behind the wheel.

Ginelli walks over, raps sharply on the window.

GINELLI
Hey, kid, wake up. I gotta a job for you.

Spurton sits up startled. Then he rolls down his window.

SPURTON
What's the word man?

GINELLI
What's your name?

SPURTON
Spurton. Frank Spurton.

Ginelli reaches inside his coat pocket and withdraws a wad of bills.

GINELLI
Okay Mr Frank Spurton. How'd you like to earn some money?

Spurton, fully awake, gets out of the Nova.

SPURTON
Okay, but I don't do nothin' that goes on videotape.

GINELLI
Nothin' like that. There are some Gypsies camped out about a couple of miles down that way? They're gonna be leaving tomorrow morning. You find out where they go and you call me. That's all.

Ginelli counts out ten fifties from a wad he takes from his pocket. On second thought, he hands Spurton another four of the bills.

MOMENTS LATER —

Ginelli, back in his Ford, leans out the window to Spurton.

GINELLI
And what's the number you're gonna call?

Spurton peers at a scrap of paper with pencilled numbers on it.

SPURTON
Four-Three-Three—Four-Thousand-Three. Room Nineteen. But what's your name in case somebody else answers?

GINELLI
I'll answer.

Ginelli gives Spurton a curt nod then peels out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM — EARLY MORNING

Ginelli is lying on the twin bed, half asleep.

BILLY
So what are we waiting for now?

GINELLI
A FedEx delivery.
<<QUITMARK>>
The phone rings. Ginelli smiles and picks up the receiver.

GINELLI (cont)
And a phone call. (Into phone) Yeah?

INTERCUT: FILLING STATION -- EARLY MORNING

Close up of Frank Spurton standing in a phone booth, looking a little nervous.

SPURTON
They're at a small farm off Route 92. Can't miss'em. But I think they made me.

GINELLI
If I were you, friend, I'd get the fuck away as quick as I could. And lose my number on the way.

SPURTON
Yeah, you're probably right.

Spurton hangs up, and goes back to his car, looking right and left. He's so nervous he drops his keys. As he leans down to pick them up...

A HAND —

comes into frame, takes the keys, and hands them to Spurton. Spurton looks up into the face of...

GABE —

the young Gypsy man. He's grinning at Spurton.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM — AFTERNOON

The sun pours into the room. Billy is watching television, packing away chips and dip — now and then twingeing with some pain in his bandaged hand. O.S. we hear the Shower Water running. It stops. Then a knock at the door.

GINELLI (O.S.)
Sign for me, Billy!

Billy rises slowly, gets to the door and opens it.

A FEDERAL EXPRESS MAN with three packages stands on the other side, his truck parked laterally behind another car. The FedEx Man stares at Billy.

FEDEX MAN
Didn't mean to stare, Mister.

BILLY
I'm getting used to it.

FEDEX MAN
I once seen a picture of a guy who was almost as thin as you are.

EXT: MOTEL — DAY — MOMENTS LATER

Billy stands in the doorway of his hotel room as the Fed Ex van pulls away. Across the parking lot, he sees Spurton's Chevy Nova. On the side, in shaving cream, is the legend —

WHITE MAN FROM TOWN

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL PARKING LOT — DAY — MOMENTS LATER

Billy, who has been looking into the car, turns as Ginelli approaches.

GINELLI
Billy, what are you doing out here?

BILLY
You said you left a message for Lemke last night — what was the message?

GINELLI
I warned the bastard to take the curse off you.

Frank Spurton's corpse sits behind the wheel. There are three precise round holes in his face — one in each eye and a third where his nose should be.

THE WORD "NEVER" —

has been carved into Spurton's forehead. In the young man's lap is the body of a strangled capon, and the bird's wide-eyed head pokes out of Spurton's mouth, like a cuckoo in rigor mortis.

BILLY
I think it's time for us to move on.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: BARN/GARAGE — NIGHT

A country farm building, half barn, half garage. Ginelli's Ford is inside.

EXT: COUNTRY FARMHOUSE — NIGHT

19th Century, white clapboard, vertical lines. It looks uninhabited. Maybe there's a hint of light behind one of the upstairs rooms.

INT: BEDROOM — COUNTRY FARMHOUSE — NIGHT

It's old-fashioned, cramped and dusty. Ginelli has unpacked his hardware store purchases and the contents of the Fed Ex boxes.

Arranged on the bed are a spring-loaded knife, a lady's draw-string leather evening bag, a box of leadshot, three dispensers of industrial strength strapping tape, a jar of lamp black, four carefully wrapped blue glass bottles with dark liquid inside, and a Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifle with 400 rounds of ammunition.

Ginelli is wearing jungle assault clothes, and is blackening his face and hands. Billy enters the room, shaking his head.

BILLY
Where the hell are we?

GINELLI
Rural Route 2, Box 21, Center Hovell
Maine. Third floor attic.

BILLY
Whose house is this?

GINELLI
It belongs to Mr and Mrs Theodore
Norcross.

Ginelli expertly pumps and tests the Kalishnokov. Billy looks sick.

BILLY
Listen, you didn't —

GINELLI
(Grinning) They're spending a free weekend at the Ritz-Carlton in Boston.

BILLY
My wife gives me a blow-job and so far four people are dead. (Sincere) This thing can't escalate anymore.

GINELLI
(With equal conviction) Billy, they killed that kid to show their contempt for me. Things like that — they make it personal.

By this time, Ginelli has blackened his face and his hands. He shoulders the rifle, stuffs the strapping tape into his pockets, and starts for the door. Billy stops him.

BILLY
The boy died because of me. You've got to let me help you.

GINELLI
You can help me by staying here and lying low. And stay away from the windows.

CUT TO:

EXT: GYPSY CAMP — NIGHT

The Gypsies have rented an empty field that's situated in a vale nearby the old farmhouse Ginelli and Billy occupy.

A Slow Car pulls up very quietly, parking on the side of the road, its headlights off. As the DRIVER stealthily gets out and starts to open the trunk, a GYPSY SENTRY leaps atop him.

But just as quickly, the Sentry slips off again, with a low laugh. The Driver gives the Sentry a buddy-buddy punch in the arm. Then both men lean into the trunk and take out a caged and gagged Pit Bull Terrier. While the Sentry pokes at the Pit Bull with a stick, the Driver hefts the cage overhead and walks away...

GINELLI —

suddenly appears behind the Gypsy Sentry. The Gypsy closes the trunk and Ginelli clobbers him in the head with the butt end of the Kalashnikov. Before the Sentry collapses onto the ground, Ginelli begins to bind him to a tree with the strapping tape.

IN THE GYPSY CAMP —

Everyone gathers around as the driver clips the ID collar off the stolen dog. Lemke watches from his open trailer door for a moment, then turns back inside.

GINELLI —

has crept round to another part of the dark vegetation encircling the camp. He lies down prone on a flat outcropping of rock.He looks down from the ledge to the Gypsy Camp.

CUT TO:

INT: LEMKE'S TRAILER — NIGHT — SAME TIME

The Old Man, seemingly distracted and pre-occupied, is counting out and rolling quarters with practiced speed and dexterity. He's being helped by a WIRY BOY, about 12, with big sad eyes. Suddenly O.S. there's a LOUD SHOT.

EXT: TRAILER

One of the Trailer's tires is hit and blown. A second shot. A second tire explodes.

RESUME INT: TRAILER

The entire trailer suddenly lists forward. Another SHOT, another PNEUMATIC EXPLOSION and one whole side of the trailer drops down against the earth. The Wiry Boy throws himself bodily between Lemke and the direction the shots are coming from as Lemke's belongings are tossed from their shelving and smash and spill on the floor. O.S. the SHOUTING begins.

EXT: THE GYPSY CAMP

GYPSIES —

pour out of their vehicles and their tents, half-dressed and a few of them armed. They're frantic and filled with fear.

GINELLI —

sights in on the remaining tire of Lemke's camper. He aims low, and hits the rear tire of the camper. It explodes. Not a single bullet hits the camper shell.

LEMKE —

calmly exits the flattened camper. The SHOTS CONTINUE — now high and harmless. Lemke's people rush to protect him, pushing him forwards. The gunfire drops and smashes all the windows of the vehicle directly in front of Lemke. The old man stops, impassive, and does not duck as do everyone around him.

INT: ATTIC ROOM — NIGHT — SAME TIME

Billy hears the shots and becomes agitated. Sitting on the couch, he begins to hyper-ventilate. It looks as if this might be his Waterloo as well.

RESUME EXT: GYPSY CAMP

The Gypsy Limousine is idling at the edge of the circle. The tribe is hustling Lemke towards it.Just as he seems safely inside the back seat, another barrage of shots smashes the back window first, and then the front. One more single shot and --

The Engine Block bursts into flame.

GINELLI —

is coming to the end of his ammunition. He puts in his last clip and starts firing, broad and hard.

DOWN IN THE CAMP --

While the Gypsy Women huddle the Gypsy Children together and bend over them protectively, some of the GYPSY MEN point to the sniper's location.

One of the Gypsy Men fires up into the darkness. No return fire from the hill. The Gypsy Men pause. Then grin at one another. But then...

A BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE —

smashes the windows in the few vehicles that remain intact.

THE GYPSIES --

all lie flat on the ground, covering their heads. Lemke stands erect, his appearance brave, unconcerned, and untroubled.

GINELLI —

continues to fire from his protected, invisible vantage. But then he falters when he sees...

LEMKE —

looking directly at him. Slowly Lemke raises his arm and points in Ginelli's direction.

THE GYPSY MEN —

who realize no one's been hit by the Sniper. Emboldened, one of the Gypsy Men spots movement in the vegetation on the hillside, he squeezes off a sudden shot and there's a CURDLING SHRIEK...

The Gypsies -- men, women, and children -- all cheer.

INT: ATTIC — NIGHT — SAME TIME

Billy tries to get up but collapses on the floor to his knees. He looks around the room in a panic. He's confused, and unfocussed.

BILLY
(Uncertainly) Linda...?

He falls to his knees on the floor, barely breathing.

RESUME EXT: GYPSY CAMP

Gina excitedly takes her grandfather's hands.

GINA
He's dead, old-Papa! The eyelak is dead!

But Lemke only slowly shakes his head no. Just then...

THE GYPSY SENTRY —

staggers out of the darkness, still half bound with Ginelli's tape. There's a big hole in his lungs, and he wheezes blood. In his outstretched hand is a blood-stained note.

The Sentry pitches forward onto the ground. Someone wrests the note out of the dying man's hand, and carries it to Lemke.

A LONG SHOT —

showing Ginelli creeping up the front steps of the house.

BACK TO SCENE —

CU: THE NOTE

The White Man from Town says take off the curse.

Lemke looks up. The Gypsy Sentry dies on the ground before Lemke.

CUT TO:

INT: FARMHOUSE — NIGHT

Without turning on the lights, Ginelli creeps up the stairs. He goes down the hallway, and then opens a bedroom door.

Just inside the open doorway, Billy lies motionless on the floor.

GINELLI
Billy...?

Ginelli presses two fingers to Billy's wrist to check for a pulse. Not finding one, he tries Billy's neck. It's feeble.

He scoops Billy up, carries him to a couch. He tears through the boxes he received, and finally finds what he wants — a tiny ampule of ammonia.

He pops it right beneath Billy's nose. Billy revives groggily.

GINELLI
Relax, buddy.

BILLY
Was I dead...?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: GYPSY CAMP — MORNING

The destruction looks worse in the morning. The Gypsies appear nervous — as if eager to pack up and leave. But the camp is filled with local and state trooper cars. An ambulance is being loaded with the body of the dead sentry and several patrolmen prowl the bushes on the hillside, where the Sentry was shot.

INT: KITCHEN — FARMHOUSE — MORNING — SAME TIME

In the b.g. out the dirty window can be seen the Gypsy camp. Ginelli, dressed in sports coat and tie, takes down two Mason jars of homemade preserves, empties them into the trash, and then washes them out. During this process we see a shoulder holster with .38 -- in fact, Ginelli looks less like a Mobster than a field operative with the FBI.

BILLY (O.S.)
Richie...?!

INT: STAIRCASE — FARMHOUSE — MORNING — SAME TIME

Billy, coughing, beating at his chest with his fist, collapses on the stairs. He sits with his head in his hand. Ginelli calls from the kitchen.

GINELLI (O.S.)
You okay?

Billy tries to respond but can't. Ginelli comes out of the kitchen, carefully wiping off the mason jar, now filled with a thick dark liquid.

BILLY
(Wheezing) Whatever you're gonna do, better do it in a hurry.

GINELLI
Stay down here. I'll be back in a while, and then we'll be leaving.

Billy tries to reply, but goes into a coughing jag and can't. Slipping the Mason jars into his pockets, Ginelli starts out the door.

GINELLI (cont'd)
Keep the curtains closed, and don't answer the door.

CUT TO:

INT: FORTUNE TELLING VAN — MORNING

Gina sits with a board across her lap, working on some papers. There's a knock at the back doors of the van.

GINA
Yes?

Ginelli opens the back doors and flashes a laminated FBI I.D. card with his picture on it.

GINELLI
F.B.I. Special Agent Stoner. Could I ask you a few questions, Mrs Lemke?

Gina smiles a quiet, cultured smile. She sounds like a graduate student:

GINA
I'm not married, and if I don't get my correspondence-course lessons in the mail by tomorrow morning I'm going to lose points for lateness. Can you talk to somebody else?

He has to crouch, but Ginelli goes deeper into the van. He hands Gina a photograph of Halleck.

GINELLI
Can you identify —

Gina interrupts, instantly returning to the Gypsy Harpy:

GINA
That pig?! He killed my tante-nyjad!

GINELLI
Mister William Halleck —

GINA
Arrest him! Throw him in jail! It was him last night, wasn't it?

GINELLI
Not Halleck himself we think. We believe he hired someone to attack your camp. But we do have Mr Halleck in custody.

Gina draws her breath in sharply.

GINELLI (cont)
Would you be willing to identify him personally?

Gina throws down her board and papers. She's stands, ready to go.

CUT TO:

EXT: GYPSY CAMP -- MORNING -- MOMENTS LATER

Ginelli and Gina are heading through the camp towards the highway.

One of the STATE TROOPERS says something to Ginelli, but he flashes his badge, and the State Trooper steps aside. Then, one of the Gypsy Women says something to Gina. Before she can answer...

GINELLI
Don't tell 'em where you're going.

GINA
(Wary) Why?

GINELLI
Because I want an identification — not a lynching.

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHWAY — MORNING — MOMENTS LATER

Ginelli leads Gina past the line of Gypsy and official vehicles. They're heading uphill towards the Farmhouse where Billy is.

GINA
Where's your car?

GINELLI
Up there. And Halleck's in it.

There's a grim glee in Gina's expression. Ginelli reacts to it.

GINELLI (cont)
And that's all I want from you, too. Just an identification.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — FARM HOUSE — MORNING

Billy has set a chair directly in front of the open refrigerator. He's weak, but he steadfastly devours everything in there. He washes down a jar of sweet pickles with a pint of half-and-half.

As he lowers his arm, he catches sight of...

A SKIN LESION —

on his forearm.

BILLY
Potassium. Where are the damned potassium tablets?

When he struggles to his feet, he sees, out the window...

GINELLI AND GINA —

headed toward the garage. Startled and frightened, Billy drops back into his chair. He's weakening so rapidly that even small movement wracks him with pain.

He stifles his cry with his fist, so as not to be heard. Tears flow from his filmy eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE GARAGE — MORNING — SAME TIME

Gina is increasingly nervous. As Ginelli unlocks the garage door, she almost bolts. But he turns just in time to grab her arm. He hands her another photograph.

GINELLI
Almost forgot. A photograph of the man we suspect of attacking your camp last night —

The photograph is a police mug shot of Ginelli, front view and profile. No name — just numbers at the bottom.

GINA
You! It was you, you bastard!

Ginelli jerks open the garage door, and pushes Gina through It.

INT: GARAGE — MORNING — CONT ACTION

Gina has fallen against the hood of Ginelli's Ford. Ginelli comes in and locks the door behind him. Gina starts to attack, but when Ginelli turns he's holding a Mason Jar filled with a dark liquid. Gina hesitates. Ginelli opens the top of the Mason Jar.

GINELLI
What this is really all about is making sure you don't put any more holes through people's hands.

He hurls the liquid in her face. Gina screams, claps her hands over her eyes and falls to the ground. Ginelli puts a foot on her neck.

GINELLI
You scream and I'll kill you. (Beat) You just got a faceful of Pepsi Cola.

He takes his foot off her.

GINELLI (cont)
And baking soda.

Gina gets to her knees and springs for Ginelli. He sidesteps and she bangs her head against an old support beam. Blood flows down her cheek. She slips to the cement floor, apparently unconscious.

Ginelli bends down to examine her. Suddenly, Gina's hand raises overhead with a large, rusty nail. She shears it across his forehead opening a long cut. Then she rips through his trousers' leg and draws more blood.

Ginelli slams her back to the concrete, and pulls his .38. He pushes the barrel against her eyelid, closes it, then applies a gentle pressure to her eyeball beneath.

GINELLI
Go for it, bitch!

He wipes the blood from his forehead.

GINELLI (cont'd)
Go ahead. You spoiled my face.

Gina's only movement is a snarling curl of her lips.

GINELLI (cont)
I'd love for you to. I'd do it back to you, whore, and go out and order me a Porterhouse steak.

Gina's expression changes. Ginelli takes out pre-cut lengths of rope and binds Gina's feet and hands.

GINELLI (cont)
Halleck cursed you. And guess what little girl — I am the curse.

GINA
(Spits back) Fuck his curse, that pig!

GINELLI
My friend Billy told me not to hurt anyone. That ends today when the sun goes down. Tonight the old man gets away with nothing. Tell him to take off the curse. His last chance. I'm not going to ask again.

Ginelli pulls a piece of paper and a quarter from his pocket and sticks them down the front of her dress.

GINELLI (cont)
At noon today you call this number. Give me the Old Man's answer. Is he gonna take off the curse?

GINA
Save your quarter. The answer is no.

GINELLI
Saves me some time. This evening I take out those twin boys — how old are they, eleven maybe? And in the morning I turn three women into widows. But this morning, even before the sun goes down... I start with you.

Ginelli pulls out a second jar of dark fluid, opens it, and spills a few drops onto the hem of Gina's skirt. It bubbles, burns, and instantly dissolves the fabric.

Gina is silent; this time she believes him. Ginelli places the open jar of acid between her thighs.

He pushes open the garage doors, gets into the car, and drives out.

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHWAY — MORNING — A FEW MINUTES LATER

Ginelli's Ford turns out of the driveway and heads down the highway. A moment later Gina hurtles out of the garage.

GINA
Your friend is a pig and he'll die thin!
But you'll die first, you bastard!

She hurls the bottle of acid at the retreating car, already out of sight.

INT: FORD — MORNING — SAME TIME

Billy, weak and wretched, has a bed of pillows and blankets on the back seat. He peers out the back window at Gina's figure in the highway, then collapses.

BILLY
Where to now?

GINELLI
International House of Pancakes. (Beat)
The one in Bangor.

CUT TO:

EXT: FILLING STATION -- NOON

Lemke, head bowed and even grimmer than usual, sits in the passenger seat of the fortune-telling van. Outside, Gina enters the same telephone booth the unfortunate Spurton used a day or two before.

INSIDE THE TELEPHONE BOOTH --

Gina puts a quarter in the telephone, and dials the number on the scrap of paper Ginelli gave her.

OPERATOR (filtered)
Please deposit two dollars and twenty-five cents.

With disgust, Gina does so. The Call Rings through, and is answered immediately -- by ANOTHER OPERATOR.

ANOTHER OPERATOR (filtered)
Ms Lemke? Please hold, and I'll patch you through.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM — GINELLI'S HOUSE — NOON — SAME TIME

It's Ginelli's Wife who's on the line with Gina. She's working two phones and some complex looking equipment. She puts one on hold, then picks up another receiver.

GINELLI'S WIFE
I've got her for you, baby.

As she punches more buttons...

CUT TO:

INT: INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES — BANGOR — NOON

Ginelli talks on a pay phone.

IN A CORNER BOOTH —

Billy is trying to get the cap off the bottle of potassium tablets. He finally has to ask a WAITRESS for assistance.

When she gets the cap off, she pours the last two tablets into Billy's bandaged palm. He pops them, swills them down with coffee. He tries to speak his thanks but can't.

The Waitress nods and goes off, meeting Ginelli as he hangs up the phone.

WAITRESS
Mister, take your friend to a doctor. Nobody oughta die in a pancake house.

GINELLI
I just made him an appointment with the man who can cure him.

Ginelli returns to the booth. He sees Billy's weakening condition and reaches out and grabs his forearm.

GINELLI (cont'd)
That old fucker gave in. Just a few hours, Billy, a few more hours and we got him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE GREAT WHITE WATER TOWER OF BANGOR — MORNING

This weird land-mark is of white-washed wood, with lattice-work and a spiralling enclosed stairway. Some kids are running under-manned scrimmages. A WOULD-BE QUARTERBACK rears back for a long pass, his WOULD-BE RECEIVER goes out for a long pass, backing up, backing up, until...

HE SMASHES INTO BILLY --

knocking the pathetically weak, frail, thin man backward and onto a bench.

RECEIVER
Oh listen mister, I'm sor—

The Receiver breaks off, staring at Billy. Billy's never looked worse: the collision looks as if might have killed him. His eyes are rolled up in his head, his breath is a rattle, his bony hands clack like castanets.

The Receiver is just staring at Billy when the Quarterback comes up and drags him away:

QUARTERBACK
Come on Mickey, I got some Mac-Attack coupons from my idiot brother...

As the two boys back away -- still staring at Billy wheezing on the park bench...

GINELLI --

comes up from behind. He puts his jacket around Billy's heaving shoulders, and then sits down next to him.

GINELLI
I'm right behind you. Parked right over there behind that hedge. Okay?

BILLY
Richie... Thanks...

GINELLI
You want to thank me? Get this old bastard. (Serious) I owed you...

Ginelli gets up and prepares to go.

GINELLI
When you're dealing with the old bastard, Billy... keep it stiff.

When Ginelli leaves, Billy's head nods forward onto his chest. His breathing is so light and shallow it's difficult to tell whether he's still on the earth.

DISSOLVE TO:

SOME TIME LATER --

Billy looks dead. Somebody shakes him. Shakes him so hard he nearly tumbles off the end of the bench.

LEMKE (O.S.)
Wake up, White Man From Town.

Billy startles awake. Opening his eyes, he sees...

CU: LEMKE'S FACE —

so close that the Old Man's breath blows Billy's hair.

LEMKE
Your dreams smell bad to me. They make you stink like a Greyhound toilet.

Billy tries to push Lemke away, but the old Gypsy grabs Billy's arm, pushes up the sleeve, and pinches the transparent skin between two fingers. He pulls and twists, until Billy is yelping and moaning.

BILLY
I'm awake.

Lemke turns his head so that Billy finds himself staring at...

A GOLD HOOP —

dangling from the old man's earlobe. Lemke flicks the hoop. It glitters and glistens hypnotically.

LEMKE
Maybe you're still dreaming, White Man —

Suddenly Lemke whips his head back around so that Billy is staring at...

LEMKE'S DISEASED NOSE —

Here the rot has spread. Dark lines now radiate out from the ruins of his nose and across most of his left cheek.

LEMKE (cont)
— maybe you dream I bring you something tastes so good it's gonna make you fat, White Man From Town!

Lemke's grin is evil. He looks down, and Billy follows the old man's gaze to...

A DOUBLE-CRUST PIE IN A DENTED TIN PLATE —

rested in the old Gypsy's narrow lap. Lemke takes out a pocket knife.

LEMKE (cont'd)
You kill my daughter, nothing happen to you till I make it happen.

With the pocket knife, Lemke makes a slit in the upper crust of the pie. When he withdraws the knife, red droplets fall onto the crust.

LEMKE (cont)
My daughter die, you deserve to die, fat or thin. So I curse you.

Lemke makes Billy take the knife. Then he hooks his mis-shapen thumbs over opposing sides of the pie plate and pulls gently.

LEMKE (cont)
I give you this so your crazy friend don't hurt my children no more. You want your little girl hurt, White Man From Town?

BILLY
Shut up, Lemke.

LEMKE
(Quiet) Yes. You win, White Man From Town.

The slit in the pie gapes open, showing a viscous red filling. The lumps in it might be strawberries or they might be blood clots.

LEMKE (cont)
If you want to be rid of the curse first you give it to the pie —

Lemke takes the knife back and then suddenly...

SLITS OPEN THE DRESSING OVER BILLY'S PALM —

and then he rips off the gauze and tape. Billy cries out between clenched teeth at the unexpected pain.

LEMKE (cont)
— and then you give the pie with the curse inside it to somebody else.

THE HOLE THROUGH BILLY'S HAND —

is a dark red, ragged circle in his white frostlike palm. Lemke grabs Billy's fingers and holds the wounded hand directly over the pie. He holds out the pocket knife, still stained red.

Billy hesitates, but understands what he must do. He takes the knife and...

SAWS THROUGH THE HEALING FLESH OF HIS WOUND —

He yelps and twists with the pain, but Lemke holds his hand tight over the pie.

BLOOD SPEWS IN A THIN WATERY STREAM —

into the gaping slit in the crust of the pie.

LEMKE —

begins a guttural incantation in Rom.

BILLY TWISTS THE KNIFE —

in the wound so that the blood flows thicker and faster into the pie. Finally...

LEMKE (cont)
Enough.

Lemke takes the knife away. Billy falls back against the bench, nearly fainting. He doesn't look strong enough to stand.

LEMKE (cont)
You gain weight too, but somebody got to eat that pie and soon, or the curse come back on you double.

Lemke takes a bandanna from his pocket and wraps Billy's wounded hand. The pie is on the bench between them.

LEMKE (cont)
The pie is yours, White Man From Town. (Teasing) Why not eat it yourself? You die, but you die strong.

Billy seems suddenly to regain some strength. Using his good hand, he angrily waves Lemke away.

BILLY
Get out of here, Old Man. What happens now is my business.

CUT TO:

EXT: PARK AND FORD -- AFTERNOON -- MINUTES LATER

The Ford was parked out of sight behind a hedge across the street from the park. Billy approaches with the pie. He still looks bad but he's got some life in him now.

Ginelli is not inside the unlocked car. Billy puts the pie on the back seat, covers it with a road map, then looks all around the area for Ginelli. Billy senses something's wrong.

BILLY
(To himself) Christ! Where the hell is he?

He gets in the passenger side of the car.

INT: FORD

Billy looks all around for some sort of clue or message from Ginelli.

BILLY
He must have left a message. And the keys.

Billy checks the ignition, then checks the glove compartment but it's stuck. He slams it with the side of his fist.

THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT SPRINGS OPEN --

and a handful of ball bearings spill out into Billy's lap. And after the ball bearings comes Ginelli's severed hand, with one of his fingers punching through the steel ring holding the car keys.

Billy presses his head back against the seat, his eyes shut tight in grief.

CUT TO:

EXT: INTERSTATE 95 -- MAINE -- DAY

The sign reads: SOUTH -- BOSTON / PROVIDENCE / NEW YORK

EXT: REST STOP -- INTERSTATE 95 -- MAINE -- DAY

Billy has pulled the Ford to an unoccupied end of the parking area.

INSIDE THE FORD —

Ginelli's bag is open on the back seat. Billy gingerly slips Ginelli's hand into the pocket of a jacket, rolls the jacket up, and sticks it into a rumpled grocery sack.

RESUME EXT: REST STOP

Billy gets out, and dunks the sack into a trash barrel with a sign reading **Put Trash in Its Place.** Then he heads for a bank of pay phones.

INT: KITCHEN — HALLECK HOUSE — DAY

Linda, all but jumping up and down, is on the phone with her father.

LINDA
(Into phone) Daddy? Are you okay?

INTERCUT: I-95 SERVICE AREA — DAY

Billy is on a pay phone.

BILLY (Into Phone)
I'm still pretty thin — but I feel much better. I'm gonna be fine. Honey, I need you to do something for me.

LINDA (Into Phone)
Anything, Daddy. You know that.

BILLY (Into Phone)
I want you to stay at Georgia's tonight. I'm coming home but I want to surprise your mother so don't tell her.

Linda hesitates.

LINDA
Ah, Dad... Mom has company. Maybe you should —

BILLY
That's all right, honey, I'll need to talk to Dr Houston, too.

INT: POWDER ROOM — HALLECK HOUSE — DAY

Mike Houston is swallowing two pills with a palmful of water. He dries his hands, flushes the toilet, and exits into...

INT: DEN — HALLECK HOUSE — DAY — SAME TIME

Heidi, with a radically new hair-style, sits on the edge of the couch, talking on the phone.

HEIDI (INTO PHONE)
Billy, is that you? (Listens) Oh my God really?! Billy, you're not —

She puts her hand over the receiver and hisses to Houston:

HEIDI
He's coming back!

HOUSTON
When?!

HEIDI (Into Phone)
Billy when are you —

RESUME BILLY AT THE PAY PHONE

He interrupts Heidi impatiently.

BILLY (Into Phone)
In a couple of days. Heidi, there's one thing you have to do. You get in touch with Michael Houston — you can do that tonight, can't you, Heidi? And tell him that you've changed your mind about the committal order.

HEIDI
I'll try to find him, Billy.

BILLY
I imagine he's around somewhere. Tell him he needs to have the Res Geste declared null and void. I don't want to get arrested as soon as I cross the state line.

Billy hangs up, and heads back to his car.

RESUME INT: DEN

Houston is fixing a drink for Heidi. He brings it to her.

HEIDI
Sometime tomorrow. The next day. God, I dread this.

HOUSTON
We'll be ready for him. I've found a nice, quiet place up in Farmington. I'll give 'em a call in the morning so they'll expect him.

Houston makes a quick signal for silence. Linda enters.

LINDA
(Cold) Hi. Is my notebook out here?

Houston hands her a binder notebook with LINDA in huge diagonal letters.

HOUSTON
I almost sat on it.

LINDA
Thanks. Mom, I'm going to spend the night with Georgia again. I'll be back tomorrow. (Beat) You two have a nice evening.

She exits.

CUT TO:

EXT: DRIVEWAY -- HALLECK HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ginelli's Ford ticks away the heat. In the back seat, the pie crust picks up the orange light of the street lamp. It's pulsing again.

The house is unlighted. Sound of a key in the lock.

CUT TO

INT: FIRST FLOOR -- HALLECK HOUSE -- NIGHT

Everything's as black as pitch. Billy calls out tentatively:

BILLY
Heidi...?!

He bangs sharply against something in the darkness.

BILLY (cont'd)
Damn! Damn!

Heidi's voice sounds from the stairway, low and tense:

HEIDI
Billy? Didn't expect you back so soon.

She turns on the light. Billy and Heidi look at one another.

BILLY
I like your hair that way.

There's a pause. They should hug and kiss at this point. They don't.

HEIDI
Billy you're so thin...

BILLY
And totally exhausted. You mind if I turn in?

Billy starts up the stairs.

HEIDI
Linda went to Georgia's for the night. I'll sleep in her room. So I won't disturb you.

Heidi is coming downstairs and Billy goes up. He blocks her way.

BILLY
Did you see Mike Houston today?

HEIDI
(Startled) Ah —

BILLY
About lifting the commitment order.

HEIDI
(Relieved) He said he'd take care of it first thing tomorrow morning.

BILLY
Fine — and you don't have to explain, I know you did it for my own good.

Billy continues upstairs; Heidi comes down.

CUT TO:

INT: MASTER BEDROOM — HALLECK HOUSE — NIGHT

Billy has undressed, and put on the same bathrobe we first saw him in. It nearly wraps around him twice, but he feels comfortable in it.

He glances at his wrist watch, and then notices...

THE WHITE BAND OF SKIN AROUND HIS RING FINGER —

but there's no ring. Billy laughs bitterly to himself:

BILLY
When did that fall off...?

O.S. he hears Heidi's hushed voice. He goes out into...

INT: SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY -- NIGHT -- CONT ACTION

He heads towards the stairs. We can hear Heidi's anxious voice from below.

HEIDI (O.S.)
No, I tried at the hospital. So would you please beep him? (Listens) Michael <u>always</u> has his beeper. It's an emergency —

Grimly, Billy goes towards the stairwell.

INT: DEN -- HALLECK HOUSE -- NIGHT -- SAME TIME

Heidi's on the phone in here.

HEIDI
(Into Phone) All right — just tell him — ah — tell him that Billy is —

Billy's voice sounds from above:

BILLY (O.S.)
Heidi? You on the phone?

Realizing with frustration she can't continue the phone call message, she reluctantly hangs up the phone.

HEIDI
No... You need something Billy?

She stands at the bottom of the stairwell, and looks up at him uncertainly -- wondering if he'd heard anything. But Billy has only a sweet smile for her.

BILLY
There's a present for you on the back seat of the car. I'm not dressed so would you mind —

HEIDI
Don't worry, I'll get it. You stay up there and take it easy.

EXT: HALLECK DRIVEWAY — NIGHT

Heidi takes the pie out of Ginelli's Ford. She raises the pie close to her face and peers at it curiously in the illumination of the security light over the garage.

INT: DOWNSTAIRS — HALLECK HOUSE — NIGHT

Billy stands halfway up the stairs, his face in shadow. Heidi enters with the pie. She smiles half-heartedly.

HEIDI
Looks scrumptious. What kind is it?

BILLY
Try it and see.

Billy turns and climbs the stairs. He enters the bedroom, drops the robe from his shoulders, and slips into bed. He smiles peacefully, then turns his head aside on the pillow and closes his eyes.

THE CAMERA pans back to the open bedroom door, out into the second floor hallway, down the stairs, and through the den. O.S. we hear a cabinet opened and a plate taken out, a utensil drawer opened and rummaged through, a piece of silverware washed in the drain, the scraping of a chair across the floor.

The Camera reaches the open kitchen doorway. Heidi sits at the table, cutting a narrow slice of the pie, and putting it on her plate. She pokes at it with her fork, peers at whatever molten fruit is inside. Hesitates. Then takes a bite. Judges it tasty. She takes a bigger bite.

INT: MASTER BEDROOM — NIGHT — SAME TIME

Billy rolls his head over in the down pillow. He beats it with his fist to get the shape right, then opens his eyes. He listens to the familiar sounds of Heidi in the kitchen below.

BILLY
(Reflective) Sorry, Heidi. But now you'll see what it's like.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: KITCHEN — HALLECK HOUSE — EARLY MORNING

The house is quiet and still. Billy comes down the stairs, and smiles with grim satisfaction when he sees...

THE PIE PLATE — A DESSERT PLATE, FORK, AND NAPKIN —

on the kitchen table. Nearly a third of it is gone. Billy smiles a smile of grim satisfaction as he tosses the crumbled napkin, and carries the dessert plate and dessert fork towards the sink. But then...

THE PLATE DROPS FROM HIS HAND AND SHATTERS —

on the floor. Billy stares at another dessert plate and fork, also with crumbs and bits of filling, on top of the counter. Right next to the plate is Linda's notebook binder.

As Billy whirls round, Linda enters, dressed in a jogging outfit.

LINDA
Surprise! Oh Daddy you look terrible, but I'm so glad to see you!

BILLY
Linda — did you eat any of that pie?

Linda starts picking up the broken plate.

LINDA
It was delicious. I'm gonna go for my run now. (Beat) Daddy, I want you to promise me something...

Billy doesn't reply. He's in shock.

LINDA (cont'd)
Promise me that if something bad happens, you won't run away again.

Linda throws away the broken plate, then kisses her father.

LINDA (cont'd)
You promise...?

Billy kisses Linda. He whispers something to her.

Linda smiles and exits the back door.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN — DAY — MINUTES LATER

In the center of the table is the pie plate, the half of the pie remaining just starting to pulsate. Next to the pie plate is a...

DESSERT PLATE WITH A SINGLE SLICE OF PIE...

This piece is also pulsating. Then it stops as...

A FORK —

enters frame, and cuts out a large, dripping bite of crust and filling.

CAMERA follows fork and pie as it rises slowly to...

BILLY'S FACE —

He slowly opens his mouth, but he does not look down.

With the fork so close to his mouth, that the crust crumbs spill onto his lips...

Billy hesitates.

FADE TO BLACK